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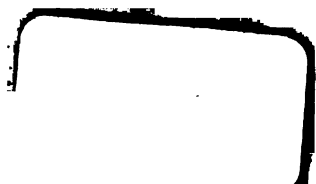
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# Jerusalem

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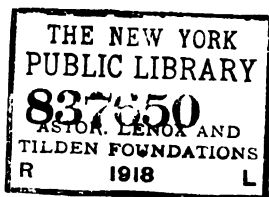
By *Selma Lagerlöf*  
Selma Lagerlöf

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TO  
SOPHIE ELKAN  
MY COMRADE  
IN LIFE AND LITERATURE





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PART I  
IN DALARNE



## INTRODUCTION

### THE INGMARSSONS

#### I

A YOUNG man was ploughing his field one summer morning. The sun was shining brightly, the grass was wet with dew, and the air was so fresh that words cannot describe it. The horses were frisky from the morning air, and pulled the plough as if it were a toy. It was quite a different pace from their usual one; the ploughman had almost to run to keep up with them.

When the earth was turned by the plough, it lay a blackish-brown, rich with moisture and fatness, and the plougher rejoiced at the prospect of soon being able to sow his rye. He thought to himself: 'How is it that sometimes I have so many misgivings, and think that life is so hard? Is anything needed but sunshine and fair weather to make me as happy as one of God's children in heaven?'

It was a long, rather broad valley, covered with numerous yellow and green cornfields, with fields of mown clover, with potato-fields in flower, and with small patches of flax, above the blue flowers of which hovered clouds of small white butterflies. To make the picture complete, there lay in the middle of the valley a substantial farmstead with many gray outbuildings and a large red-painted dwelling-house. At the gable stood two large, straggling pear-trees, at the porch a couple of young birches, in the yard two large piles of firewood, and behind the barn some huge stacks. It was as pretty a sight to see the farmhouse rise above the low fields as it is to see a ship with masts and sails tower above the wide expanse of the ocean.

'And what a farm I have!' thought he who was ploughing. 'Good, well-timbered buildings, plenty of good live-stock, and strong horses, and faithful servants, true as gold. I am as rich as anyone in the district, and need never have any fear of poverty.

'It is not poverty, either, that I am afraid of,' he said, as if in

answer to his own thoughts. 'I would be content were I only as good a man as my father and my father's father were.

'It was silly of me to begin thinking of these things,' he said, 'just now when I was so happy. But only to think that in my father's time all the peasants did exactly as he did; the morning he began his harvest they did the same, and the day we commenced to plough the fallow field at the Ingmars' farm they put the plough in the earth all over the valley. But now I have been ploughing here for a couple of hours without anyone having so much as ground a ploughshare.

'Still, I think I have managed the farm as well as anyone bearing the name of Ingmar Ingmarsson,' he said. 'I have got more for my hay than my father did, and I have done away with all the small swampy ditches which were on the farm in his time. And it is likewise certain that I do not deal so roughly with the woods, and do not turn so much into charcoal as father never could resist doing.

'At times it is rather hard to think of,' said the young man. 'I can't always take it as lightly as I do to-day. When my father and my father's father were living, people said that the Ingmarssons had lived so long in the world that they knew what would please our Lord, and people simply begged them to rule the parish. They chose both parson and clerk, they fixed the time for dredging the river, and they selected the place where the new school should be built. But no one asks my opinion, and I am not counselled about anything. All the same, it is astonishing how easy it is to bear one's troubles on such a morning; I almost feel as if I could laugh at it all. And yet I am afraid it will be worse in the autumn than it has ever been. If I do what I am thinking of doing, neither the parson nor the magistrate will ever shake hands with me again when we meet outside the church on a Sunday, and that they have always done so far. They will never make me a guardian of the poor, and I need never expect to be a churchwarden.'

Thinking is never so easy as when one walks behind a plough up the furrows and down the furrows. One is quite alone, and there is nothing to disturb one except the crows hopping about picking up worms. The ploughman seemed to think that his thoughts came as readily as if someone were whispering them into his ear; and as he at other times could not think as easily and clearly as to-day, it gladdened and cheered him. He began to think he had worried himself unnecessarily. Surely no one could expect him to bring misfortune upon himself?

He thought that if his father had been living he would have asked his advice about this, as he had been accustomed to do in all difficult matters. He became quite impatient because his father was not here to help him.

'If I only knew the way,' he said to himself, feeling half amused at the thought, 'I would go straight up to him. I wonder what Great Ingmar would say if one fine day he saw me coming? I should think he lives on a large farm with many fields and meadows, huge stacks, and lots of red cows, no black and no spotted cows, just as he always would have it here below. When I come into the best room——'

The man all of a sudden stopped ploughing in the middle of the field and laughed. The idea was so amusing, and carried him so completely away, that he hardly knew whether he was still walking here on earth. It seemed to him all at once as if he had come up to his old father in heaven.

'When I come into the best room,' he continued, 'it is full of peasants seated along the wall, and they have all reddish-gray hair, white eyebrows, and heavy under-lips, and they are as like father as one drop of water is like another. When I see there are so many people present I feel shy, and remain standing at the door; but father sits at the top of the table, and as soon as he sees me he says, "Welcome, Little Ingmar Ingmarsson!" And then he gets up and comes towards me. "I should like to talk a little with you, father," I say, "but there are so many strangers here." "Oh, they all belong to the family," says father; "these old peasants have all lived on Ingmars' Farm, and the oldest of them comes from heathen times." "But I should like to speak with you alone."

'Then father looks about, thinking whether he should go into the next room, but, as it is only I, he goes into the kitchen. Father sits down on the fireplace, and I sit down on the chopping-block. "It is a nice farm you have here, father," I say. "It is right enough," says father. "How are things going on at home, on Ingmars' Farm?" "Oh, all right," I say. "Last year we got twelve kroner for a load of hay." "Did you, really?" says father. "You have never come up here to make fun of me, Little Ingmar?" "But it is only with me that things are not going well," I say. "They are always telling me that you, father, were as wise as our Lord Himself, but no one asks my advice." "Are you not a member of the Parish Council?" asks the old man. "Neither of the Parish Council nor of the School Board; nor am I a guardian of the poor." "What have you done, Little

Ingmar?" "Oh, they say those who would manage other people's affairs must first be able to manage their own."

"Then I think the old man will look down and meditate a little. "You must see that you get a clever wife, Ingmar," he says at last. "But that is just what I cannot get, father," I say. "The poorest peasant in the parish would not let me have his daughter." "You had better tell me all about it, Little Ingmar," says father, and looks very gently at me.

"You see, father, four years ago—the same year that I took over the farm—I proposed to Brita from Bergskog." "Let me see," says father, "do any of our family live at Bergskog?" He cannot quite make out how things are down here on earth. "No, but they are well-to-do people; and you remember, father, that Brita's father is a Member of Parliament?" "Oh yes, I remember; but it would have been better if you had married one of the Ingmar family, who would have known the old customs." "You are quite right, father: I have found that out to my cost."

"Then father and I sit a little without saying anything; but then father begins again.

"She was good-looking, I suppose?" "Yes," I say; "she had dark hair and bright eyes, and roses in her cheeks. And she was clever, too, so mother was quite content that I should have her. Things would have been all right, but the misfortune was she would not have me." "No one asks such a child what she wants, I suppose?" "No; her parents made her say yes." "How do you know they made her? Of course she must have been glad to get such a rich husband as you, Ingmar Ingmarsson." "No, I can't say she was exactly glad; but the banns were published, anyhow, and the wedding-day was fixed, and Brita came to live at Ingmars' Farm before the wedding, to help mother; for mother is beginning to get old now." "There is nothing wrong in all that, Little Ingmar," says father, in order to encourage me.

"But everything went wrong with the harvest that year: the potatoes were a failure, and the cows were ill; and then both mother and I thought it was better to put off the wedding for a year. I thought there was no hurry about getting married, for the banns were published, you know; but perhaps that was rather an old-fashioned way of looking at it." "Had you taken one of our family, she would have been content with that," says father. "I dare say you are right," I say. "I could see Brita was not very pleased with the wedding being put off, but, you



see, I did not think we could afford to have a wedding. There had been the funeral in the spring, you know, and of course I did not want to take the money out of the bank." "No; it was quite right that you waited," says father. "But of course I had my doubts that Brita would not like to have the christening before the wedding." "One must first see if one can afford it," says father.

"But Brita grew every day more strange and quiet, and I could never make out what was the matter with her. I thought she was home-sick, for she had always clung to her parents and her home. It will be all right when she gets accustomed to it, I thought. She will like the Ingmars' farm by-and-by. I took no notice of it for some time; but then I asked mother how it was Brita had grown so pale, and why her eyes looked so wild. Mother said it was because she was going to have a child, and that she would be herself again when it was well over. I had my own ideas about it, and suspected it was because I had put off the marriage, but I was afraid of speaking to her about it. You remember, father, you always said the house should be painted the year I was married, and I really could not afford it that year. Everything will come right next year, I thought."

The ploughman as he walked moved his lips; he was so engrossed in his thoughts that he fancied he could see his father's face before him. 'I shall have to make everything quite plain,' he thought, 'so that he can advise me.'

"Things went on like this all through the winter, and I often thought that if Brita did not grow any happier it would have been better to send her back again to Bergskog; but it was too late for that now. Then one night towards the end of April we noticed that she had quietly left the house. We searched for her all through the night, and towards morning one of the maid-servants found her."

'Now I am silent, for I find it difficult to go on; but then father asks, "She was not dead, surely?" "No, she was not," I say, and father can hear how my voice trembles. "Was the child born?" asks father. "Yes," I say, "and she had smothered it. It was lying dead beside her." "She can't have been quite right?" "Yes, she was right enough," I say. "She did it on purpose to revenge herself on me. She would not have done it if I had married her; but now, she said, she thought that if I would not have a child honourably, I should have none at all." Father is quite silent from grief. "Had you been looking forward to having a child, Little Ingmar?" he asks at

last. "Yes," I answer. "It was hard upon you that you should fall in with such a woman. I suppose she is in gaol now?" says father. "Yes; she was sentenced to three years." "And this is why no one will allow you to marry his daughter?" "Yes; but I have not asked anyone, either." "And this is why you are not respected in the parish?" "They think this should not have happened to Brita. They say that if I had been a wise man like you, I should have talked with her and found out what was troubling her." "It is not easy for a man to understand a bad woman."

"No, father," I say; "Brita was not bad, but she was proud." "Well, that comes to the same thing," says father.

"When I can see that father, as it were, takes my side, I say: 'There are many that think I ought to have managed it so that people never had found out that the child was not born dead.'" "Why should she not be punished?" says father. "They say that if it had happened in your time you would have made the servant who found her keep quiet, so that nothing was found out." "And would you then have married her?" "No; then there would have been no necessity for me to have married her. I could have sent her home in a week or two, and had the banns annulled, because she did not get on with us." "Well, of course you could; but they cannot expect that you, who are so young, can be as wise as an old man."

"The whole parish thinks that I have behaved badly to Brita." "She has behaved worse in any case, for she has brought shame upon decent people." "But it was I who compelled her to take me." "Yes; but she ought to have been pleased at that."

"Do you not think, then, that it is my fault that she has been sent to gaol?" "I think it is her own doing that she is there." Then I get up and say slowly: "Then you do not think, father, that I need do anything for her, when she comes out?" "What could you do? Marry her?" "Well, I suppose I ought to." Father looks a little at me and asks: "Are you fond of her?" "No; she has killed my love." Then father looks down, does not say anything, but begins to meditate.

"You see, father, I cannot get over that it was I who was the cause of the trouble."

The old man remains silent.

"When I last saw her it was in court; she was so unhappy, and wept so bitterly because the child was dead. She did not say one word against me; she took all the blame upon herself. There

were many that cried, father, and the judge had almost tears in his eyes. He did not give her more than three years, either.'

'But father does not say a word.

"It will be very hard for her when she goes back to her old home," I say. "They will not be very glad to have her again at Bergskog. They think she has brought shame upon them, and they are not the kind of people who will hesitate to let her know it. And she will always have to stop at home; I suppose she will not dare ever to go to church. It will be hard for her in every way."

'But father makes no reply.

"And it is not so easy for me to marry her," I say. "It is not very nice when one has a large farm to take a wife who will be looked down upon, both by men-servants and maid-servants. Mother will not like it, either. And we could never invite people to the house, either to wedding or funeral."

'Father still remains silent.

"You see, in court I tried to help her the best I could; I told the judge that I was to blame altogether, for it was I who had compelled her to take me. I also said that I considered her so innocent that I would marry her there and then, if she could only get to care for me. I said that in order that she might get a more lenient sentence. But, although she has written me two letters, there are no signs of her having changed her mind. So you understand, father, that I am not compelled to marry her for what I said then."

'Father now sits quite still and meditates.

"I know this is to look at things from a worldly point of view, and we Ingmars have always striven to be on the Lord's side. And yet sometimes I think that our Lord would not like, perhaps, that a murderess should have such an honour."

'But father is silent.

'Then I almost feel the tears rising, and say: "You see I am only a young man, and I shall suffer in many ways if I take her. People think I have managed badly before, and if I do this they will think it worse still."

'But I cannot get father to say a word.

"I have also been thinking, father, how strange it is that we Ingmars have remained on the farm for many hundred years, whilst all the other farms have changed hands. And then I think it is because the Ingmars have tried to walk in the ways of God. We Ingmars need not fear any man; we shall only walk in God's ways."

'Then the old man raises his eyes and says: "This is a difficult question, Ingmar. I think I will go in and ask the other Ingmarssons;" and then father goes into the best room, and I remain sitting in the kitchen. And there I have to sit and wait and wait, and father does not come back. At last, when I have been waiting for many hours, I get tired of it, and go in to father. "You must have patience, Little Ingmar," says father. "This is a difficult question." And I see all the old men sitting there with closed eyes, meditating. And I wait and wait, and I suppose I am waiting still.'

He went, smiling, behind his plough, which now went quite slowly, as if the horses wanted a rest. When he got to the end of the field he pulled up. He had grown quite serious.

'It is strange that, when one asks anybody's advice, one feels instinctively what is right. Even whilst one is asking, one finds out all at once what one has been trying to find out for the last three years. Now it shall be as God wills.'

He felt that he must do it, and at the same time he thought it was so hard that he quite lost courage when he thought about it.

'God help me!' he said. . . .

Ingmar Ingmarsson was, however, not the only person abroad that early morning. An old man came walking along the pathway through the cornfields. It was not difficult to see what his profession was, for he carried a long house-painter's brush across his shoulder, and he was splashed all over with red paint. He often looked about him, as is the wont of journeymen painters, to find out a farmhouse that needed painting. He had seen several houses which he thought might answer his purpose, but he found it difficult to fix upon one. At last, from the top of a small hill, he discovered Ingmars' Farm, lying big and imposing in the midst of the valley.

'Dear me!' he said aloud in his delight, standing still, 'that dwelling-house has not been painted for the last hundred years. It is simply black with age, and the outbuildings have never seen a bit of colour. And what a lot of buildings there are!' he said. 'Why, here I have work for weeks.'

He had not gone far before he discovered a man ploughing.

'This man must know all about the neighbourhood,' he thought.

'I can get to know from him all about the big farm below.'

He turned off from the pathway, went into the fallow field, and asked Ingmar to whom that big farm belonged, and whether he thought they would have it painted.

It quite startled Ingmar Ingmarsson, and he looked at the man as if he had been a ghost.

'I declare, it is a painter!' he said to himself; 'and that he should turn up just now!'

He was quite overcome, and could not pull himself together so as to answer the man.

He remembered so distinctly that every time anyone had said to his father, 'You really ought to have that great big house of yours painted, Father Ingmar,' the old man had always answered that he would have it done the year Ingmar married.

The house-painter repeated his question once again, but Ingmar stood quite still as if he had not understood him.

'Have they at last made up their minds in heaven about the answer?' he thought. 'Is this a message from father that he wishes me to have the wedding this year?'

This thought impressed him so that he promised the man straight off that he should have the work.

He went on ploughing, much moved and almost happy.

'You will see,' he said to himself, 'that it will not be so hard to do it now that you know for certain that it is father's wish.'

## II

A WEEK or two afterwards Ingmar stood polishing some harness. He seemed to be in low spirits, and did not get on with his work. 'If I were our Lord!' he said to himself. He again did a little rubbing. 'If I were our Lord,' he continued, 'I would see that every good resolution was carried out at once. I would not give people so much time to think about it again and again, and ponder over all the difficulties. I would not give them time to polish the harness and paint the carriage; I would take them straight from the plough.'

He heard a carriage coming along the road, looked up, and at once recognised the horse and the vehicle. 'Here comes the Member from Bergskog!' he shouted into the kitchen, where his mother was working. Directly afterwards he heard fresh wood being put upon the fire, and the grinding of the coffee-mill.

The visitor drove into the yard, where he pulled up without alighting. 'No, thank you, I won't get down,' he said; 'I only want a word with you, Ingmar. I have not much time, for I am due at the parish meeting.'

'Mother will soon have the coffee ready,' Ingmar said.

'Thank you, but I must not be late.'

'It is a long time since you have been here,' Ingmar said.

His mother now appeared in the doorway, and also pressed the new-comer. 'Surely you will not go away without coming in and having a cup of coffee.'

Ingmar unbuttoned the apron, and the Member from Bergskog stood up. 'When Mother Märta herself bids me I shall have to obey,' he said.

He was a tall, good-looking man, and very agile, of a totally different stamp from Ingmar and his mother, who were plain, with sleepy faces and heavy limbs. But he had great respect for the old family on Ingmars' Farm, and would willingly have sacrificed his good looks to be like Ingmar and become one of the Ingmarssons. He had always taken Ingmar's side against his daughter, and was relieved at being so well received.

When Mother Märta shortly afterwards brought in the coffee, he told them what was really his errand.

'I should like,' he began, and cleared his throat—'I should like to tell you what we intend to do with Brita.' The cup which Mother Märta held in her hand shook a little, and the teaspoon rattled in the saucer, and then there was a painful silence. 'We think it is best she should go to America.' He again stopped, and there was another pause. He sighed over the imperturbability of these people. 'We have already taken a ticket for her.'

'I suppose she will come home first?' said Ingmar.

'No; what would be the good of that.'

Ingmar was silent again. His eyelids were nearly closed, and he sat as quietly as if he were asleep.

But Mother Märta now began to ask questions. 'She will need some clothes?'

'All that has been seen to; there is a box for her ready packed at Löffberg's, where we always put up when we go to the town.'

'Is her mother going to meet her?'

'Yes; she would like to, but I think it is better that they should not see each other.'

'Well, perhaps it is.'

'The ticket and some money are waiting for her at Löffberg's, so she will have everything she requires. I thought Ingmar ought to know it, so that he could make his mind easy,' said the Member. Now Mother Märta, too, was silent; her head-kerchief had slipped back, and she sat looking down at her apron. 'I think Ingmar ought to be looking out for another wife now,' Ingmar and his mother both remained silent. 'Mother Märta

requires more help in this big house. Ingmar should stand she has not too much to do in her old age. Brita's father was wondering if they had really heard what he had been saying: 'My wife and I would like to make everything right again,' he said at last.

In the meantime Ingmar sat silent, and felt a great happiness stealing over him. Brita was going to America, and there was no need for him to marry her. A murderess should not become the mistress of the old Ingmars' Farm. He sat silent, because he did not think it was the thing to show at once how pleased he was, but now he thought it was about time to say something.

The Member also sat quite silent; he knew he would have to give the Ingmars time to consider. At last Ingmar's mother said: 'Brita has received her punishment; now it is our turn.' The old woman meant that, if the Member wished for some help from the Ingmars as a return for having made matters smooth for them, they would be the last to refuse; but Ingmar understood the words differently—they startled him, and he felt as if he had been awakened from a dream. 'What would father think about all this, he thought, if I put the whole matter before him? What would he then say? "You must not think you can make a mockery of God's justice," he would say. "You must not think He will let it go unpunished if you let Brita alone bear all the blame. Even if her father casts her off in order to insinuate himself with you, and borrow money from you, you shall all the same follow God's way, Little Ingmar Ingmarsson."

'I believe my old father watches over me in this matter,' he thought; 'he has no doubt sent Brita's father here to show me how wicked it is to put everything on her, poor thing! He has no doubt seen that I have not had much inclination the last few days to go and meet Brita.'

Ingmar got up, poured some brandy into his coffee, and raised the cup. 'I am much obliged to you for having called here to-day,' he said, touching the Member's cup.

### III

INGMAR had been busy the whole morning with the birch-trees standing at the entrance. First he erected a scaffolding; then he bent the tops of the birches towards each other so as to make them form an arch. The trees only reluctantly allowed themselves to be bent; time after time they came undone and stood as straight as a dart.

'Than are you making there?' said Mother Märta.

'It is I thought I should like them to grow like that for a change,' said Ingmar.

After the noonday meal the farm labourers went into the yard for their mid-day rest. Ingmar Ingmarsson also took a nap, but he slept in a broad bed in the chamber inside the best room. The only one who did not sleep was the old housewife, who sat knitting in the big room.

The door to the entrance-hall was gently opened, and an old woman entered carrying two large baskets on a yoke. She said softly 'Good-day,' sat down on a chair near the door, and without saying anything took the lids off the baskets. The one was full of home-made biscuits and cakes, and the other of newly-baked wheaten loaves. The mistress of the house at once went up to the new-comer and began to bargain. In most things she was rather careful than otherwise, but she never could resist the sight of freshly-baked cakes for her coffee.

Whilst busy choosing her cakes, she began to gossip with the old woman, who, as is generally the case with people who go from house to house and know everybody, was a greater talker. 'You are a sensible body, Kajsa, and one can depend upon you,' said Mother Märta.

'Yes; if I had not the good sense to keep quiet about much of what I hear, I could make a deal of mischief.'

'But sometimes you are too close, Kajsa.'

The old woman looked up, and at once understood what she meant.

'Yes; may God forgive me,' she said, the tears coming into her eyes. 'I spoke to the Member's wife at Bergskog, but I ought to have spoken to you about it.'

'Oh! you spoke to the Member's wife, did you?' There was much scorn in the tone with which she said the words 'Member's wife.'

Ingmar Ingmarsson awoke, startled by hearing the door to the best room opened. No one entered, but the door was left ajar. He did not know whether it had sprung open of itself, or whether someone had opened it. Sleepy as he was, he remained lying still, and could hear people talking in the outer room.

'Tell me now, Kajsa, how it was you found out that Brita did not care for Ingmar.'

'Well, people said from the very first that her parents made her.'

'Tell me straight out, Kajsa, when I ask you; you need make



no ceremony about telling me the truth. I suppose I can stand anything you are able to tell me.'

'Well, it was in this way: Every time I went to Bergskog she always looked as if she had been crying. Once when I was alone with her in the kitchen, I said to her: "It is a fine husband you are getting, Brita." She looked at me as if she thought I were making fun of her. Then she said: "You are quite right, Kajsa; a fine fellow he is." She said it in such a way that I seemed all at once to see Ingmar Ingmarsson before me. And of course he is not handsome, but that I had never thought of before, for I have always had a great respect for the Ingmars. I could not help smiling a little; but Brita looked at me, and said again: "Yes, a fine fellow he is!" then she turned away and rushed into the bedroom, and I could hear how she sobbed. But when I left I thought to myself: "It will come all right in the end, for things always go well with the Ingmars." I did not wonder at her parents, for if I had had a daughter, and Ingmar Ingmarsson proposed to her, I should not have rested until she had said yes.'

Ingmar lay on his bed and heard it all. 'Mother does it on purpose,' he thought. She has her own ideas about the house-painting, the birch arch, and my going to the town to-morrow. Mother thinks I am going to fetch Brita and bring her home; mother does not know that I am such a coward that I cannot.'

'The next time I saw Brita,' continued the old woman, 'she had already come to live here. I had no chance of asking Brita how she was getting on, for the room was full of people; but when I had got a little way into the wood she came running after me. "Kajsa," she said, "have you been to Bergskog lately?" "I was there the day before yesterday," I said. "Dear me! were you there the day before yesterday? and it seems to me as if I had not been home for years." It was not easy for me to know what to say. She looked as if she could not stand anything, but would cry at whatever I said. "You can go home to see them, surely," I said. "No; I don't think I shall ever go home again." "You ought to go," I said to her; "it is so pretty there now: the whole forest is full of berries—it is simply red with cranberries in the open places." "Dear me!" she said, and her eyes grew quite big; "are there cranberries already?" "Surely you can get away for a day, and eat as many cranberries as you like?" "No, I think I had better not," she said. "If I go home it will only make it worse to come back again." "I have always heard it was a good thing to live at the Ingmars," I said; "they are honest folks." "Yes," she said, "they are honest folks." "They are

the best people in the parish," I said; "they are honourable." "Yes; it is not considered dishonourable to compel a girl to marry." "They are also wise people." "Yes; but they keep their wisdom to themselves." "Do they never say anything?" "They never say more than what is absolutely necessary." I was just going, when I thought of asking her: "Will the wedding be here or at Bergskog?" "It is to be here, as there is more room." "You should take care that they don't put off the wedding too long," I said. "It is to be in a month's time," she said. But just as I was saying good-bye to her it struck me that the Ingmars had had a poor harvest, and I said that candidly I did not think they would have a wedding this year. "In that case I must go and drown myself," said Brita. A month afterwards I heard that the wedding had been put off, and, as I was afraid that something might happen, I went to Bergskog to speak with the Member's wife. "I am afraid they are managing very badly at the Ingmars'," I said. "We are content, however they manage things," she said. "We thank God every day that we have got our daughter so well married."

'Mother need not give herself so much trouble,' thought Ingmar Ingmarsson, 'for no one from this farm is going to fetch Brita. She need not be so concerned about the arch; that is only something a man does, in order to be able to say to our Lord: "I meant to do it. Thou couldst see it was my intention. But really to do it, that is another matter."'

'The last time I saw Brita,' Kajsa continued, 'was in the middle of the winter, and the snow was deep. I was walking along a small pathway in the forest, and it was heavy walking, for it had begun to thaw, and one's feet slipped in the melting snow. I discovered someone sitting in the snow, resting; and when I came nearer I saw it was Brita. "Are you by yourself in the forest?" I said to her. "Yes, I am out for a walk." I stopped to look at her, for I could not imagine what she was doing there. "I am trying to find a steep rock," Brita replied. "The Lord preserve us! You are not going to throw yourself down?" I said, for she looked as if she were tired of life. "Yes, if I could only find a rock which was high and steep enough, I would throw myself down." "You ought to be ashamed of yourself—you, with such a good home!" "It is because I am a wicked girl, Kajsa." "It looks like it." "I shall do something dreadful, so it is better I should die." "What nonsense, child!" "Yes, I have grown wicked since I came here." Then she came quite close to me, and looked wildly at me, and she said:

"They only think how they can torment me, and I only think how I can torment them in return." "Not they, Brita; they are good people." "All they want is to bring shame upon me." "Have you told them that?" "I never speak to them. I only think of what harm I can do them. Sometimes I think I will put fire to the farm, for I know he is so fond of it. Sometimes I have thought that I would poison the cows—they are so old and ugly, and white round the eyes, that they all look as if they were relations of the family." "The dog that barks does not bite," I said. "I must do him some injury, or I shall never have any peace." "You don't know what you are talking about," I said. All at once she quite changed and began to cry. She grew very gentle, and said it was such hard work to battle with all her wicked thoughts. Then I walked home with her, and when we parted she promised she would not do any mischief if I would only promise not to tell anybody. I could not make up my mind whom to speak to about it, Kajsa said; 'I found it difficult to go to such great people as you are——'

The same moment the bell over the stables rang—the mid-day rest was over. Mother Märta hastily interrupted Kajsa. 'Tell me, Kajsa, do you think things can ever come right between Ingmar and Brita?'

'What!' said the old woman in astonishment.

'I mean, if she were not going to America, do you think she would have him?'

'How can I tell? I should not think she would.'

'You may be sure she would say no.'

'Yes, I think she would.'

Ingmar sat on the bed, with his legs dangling over the bedside. 'Now you have got what you needed; now I think you will set off to-morrow,' he said, and struck the edge of the bed with his fist. 'That mother could imagine she could make me stay at home, because she shows me that Brita does not care for me!' He struck his fist against the bedside over and over again, as if knocking down something that rose against him. 'I will try once more. We Ingmars always make a fresh start when anything goes wrong. No man worth anything can stand a woman going out of her mind because she does not like him.'

He had never before realized how thoroughly he had been beaten, and he was determined to right himself in some way or other.

'It would be a strange thing if I could not teach Brita how to be happy at the Ingmars' farm,' he said to himself.

He once again struck the bedside before he got up in order to go back to work.

'I am quite sure that it is Great Ingmar who has sent Kajsa here, in order to make me go to the town to-morrow.'

## IV

THE next day Ingmar Ingmarsson went to the town, and was walking slowly up the road leading to the gaol, which proudly crowned a small hill, close to the public gardens belonging to the town. He did not look about him, but went with downcast eyes, dragging one foot after the other, as if he were an old man. He had on his best black clothes, and a starched white shirt, which he had already crumpled. He was in a very solemn mood, and he was still uneasy and reluctant.

On coming to the open place in front of the gaol, Ingmar saw a policeman on duty, and asked him if it were not to-day that Brita Eriksdotter was to be released.

'Yes, I think there is someone coming out to-day,' answered the policeman.

'It is someone who has been punished for murdering her child,' Ingmar explained.

'Oh yes, she is to come out this morning.'

Ingmar did not go any further, but went and stood under a tree and waited. He did not take his eyes off the entrance to the gaol for a single moment. 'There are some who have entered that gateway who have been miserable enough,' he thought. 'But I don't think it is too much to say that some who have gone in there have had it easier than I who am outside.'

'Well, well, Great Ingmar has brought me here to fetch my bride from the gaol,' he said to himself. 'But I cannot say that Little Ingmar is overhappy; he would rather that she should have walked under a triumphal arch, and that her mother had been there to give her away. And then they would have driven to church with many followers. And she would have sat at his side dressed as a bride, smiling under her bridal crown.'

The gate opened several times; a clergyman came out, and the Governor's wife came out, and one or two servants going to town. At last it was Brita who came. When the door opened Ingmar's heart gave a great bound. 'There she is,' he thought. His eyes closed; it was as if he were stunned, and he did not move. When he had found courage to look up, he saw that she stood on the steps before the gateway.

He saw her standing still there for a moment. She pushed back her head-kerchief and looked at the surrounding country with clear eyes. The prison stood on high ground, and beyond the town and the woods she could see the hills of her birthplace.

Then Ingmar saw she was moved and shaken as if by some invisible power. She put her hands before her face and sat down on the stone steps. He could hear how she sobbed from where he stood.

Then he went up to where she sat and waited. She sobbed so violently that she could not hear anything; he had to wait a long time.

'You must not cry like that, Brita,' he said at last.

She looked up. 'My God, are you here?' she said. The same moment she realized all the harm she had done him, and what it must have cost him to come there. She gave a loud shriek of happiness, threw her arms round his neck, and sobbed again.

'Oh, how I have longed that you might come!' she said.

Ingmar's heart began to beat because she was so glad to see him. 'What, Brita! have you been longing for me?' he said, quite touched.

'I so wanted to ask your forgiveness.'

Ingmar drew himself up to his full height, and grew as cold as a stone pillar. 'There will be time enough for that,' he said. 'I don't think we should stay here any longer.'

'No, it is not the place to stay in.'

'I have put up at Löfberg's,' Ingmar said as they walked down the road.

'My box is also there.'

'I have seen it,' Ingmar said. 'It is too big for the cart; we must leave it at the shop until we can send for it.'

Brita stopped and looked at Ingmar. It was the first time he had mentioned that he meant to take her back with him. 'I have had a letter from father to-day. He said that you also thought I had better go to America.'

'I thought it was just as well you should have two things to choose between. I was not sure that you would want to go back with me.'

She noticed at once that he did not say he wished her to, but that might be because he would not compel her a second time. She began to waver. It was not an enviable task for him to bring such a one as she home to Ingmars' Farm.

'Tell him you mean to go to America; it is the only service you can do him,' she said to herself. 'Tell him, tell him,' she

urged herself. Whilst she was thus thinking she heard someone say: 'I am afraid I am not strong enough to go to America. They say you have to work so hard there.' It seemed to her as if it were someone else speaking, and not herself.

'Yes, so they say,' Ingmar said quietly.

She felt ashamed of herself, and thought how only that morning she had told the chaplain that she was going out into the world a new and better woman. She was discontented with herself, and walked silently for some time, wondering how she should tell him. But whenever she was on the point of telling him she was kept back by the thought that, if he were still fond of her, it would be the greatest ingratitude to repulse him a second time. 'If I could only read his thoughts!' she said to herself.

Then Ingmar noticed that she stopped and leant against the wall. 'I get quite confused by all the noise, and by seeing so many people,' she said.

He put out his hand, and she took it, and hand-in-hand they walked down the street. 'Now we look like sweethearts,' Ingmar thought, but the whole time he was wondering how it would be when he came home, and how his mother and the others would receive them.

When they came to Löfberg's, Ingmar said his horse had rested enough, and that, if she did not mind, they could drive part of the way that afternoon. Then she thought: 'Now is the time to tell him that you will not. Thank him for all he has done, and tell him that you will not.' She stood and prayed to God that it might be shown her if he had only come from pity. In the meantime Ingmar had pulled the cart out from the shed. It was newly painted, the apron was bright, and the seats had been re-covered. On the front-seat lay a little bouquet of half-faded flowers. When she saw them she again wavered. Ingmar went into the stables, harnessed the horse, and brought it out. Then she saw a little bouquet like the other on the harness, and could not help thinking that, after all, he must be fond of her, so she thought it was best not to say anything. Otherwise he might, perhaps, think that she was ungrateful, and that she did not realize how great a sacrifice he was making for her.

As they drove along, in order to break the silence, she began to question him about different things at home. With every question she reminded him of some one or other of whose opinion he was afraid. 'How that and that person will be astonished! how that and that person will make fun of me!' he thought. He only answered her in monosyllables, and time after time she felt

as if she must ask him to take her back. 'He does not want me, he does not care for me. He only does it from pity.'

She soon stopped asking him any more questions, and they drove on for miles in silence. But when they reached an inn by the roadside, there was coffee with freshly-baked bread in readiness, and there were again flowers on the tray. She knew that he must have ordered this on the previous day when he had driven past. Was that, too, only from goodness and pity? Had he been happy yesterday? Was it only to-day that he had become unhappy by seeing her coming out of the prison? Perhaps to-morrow, when he had got over this feeling, everything would be right again.

Brita had become very gentle from repentance and humility. She did not again want to cause him sorrow. Perhaps he, after all——

They stopped the night at an inn, but left early in the morning, and by ten o'clock they were in sight of their own church. When they came up to it the road was full of people and the bells were ringing. 'Dear me! it is Sunday,' Brita said, instinctively folding her hands. She forgot everything at the thought that she would go into the church and thank God. She would consecrate the new life she meant to lead by praying in the old church.

'I should like to go to church,' she said to Ingmar. At that moment she never thought of how hard it would be for him to be seen there with her, she was so full of thankfulness and devotion. Ingmar was on the point of refusing straight out; he felt he had not the courage to face the inquisitive looks and gossiping tongues of the congregation. But it will have to be gone through sooner or later, he thought, and turned up the road to the church. It will be the same thing whenever it happens.

When they drove up the hill there were many people sitting on the stone walls on each side of the road waiting for the service to begin and watching the people arrive. When they saw Ingmar and Brita, they began to whisper and nudge each other, and point towards them. She did not see anyone, but Ingmar saw for them both. Some even ran after the carriage. He was not surprised at their running and staring. They probably could not believe that they had seen aright. Of course they could not believe that he came to God's house with one who had killed her child. 'This is too much,' he thought. 'I cannot stand it.'

'I think you had better go straight into the church, Brita,' he said, when he helped her out of the carriage.

'Yes,' she said.

It was to church she wanted to go ; she had not come to meet the people. Ingmar took his own time in unharnessing the horse and giving it fodder. Many eyes were fixed upon Ingmar, but no one spoke to him. When he was ready to go into church most of the people were already in their seats, and they had commenced the first hymn. When Ingmar walked up the aisle he looked at the women's side. All the pews were full with the exception of one, and in that there was only one person. He saw at once that it was Brita, and thought that no one wanted to sit in the same pew as she. Ingmar went a few steps further, then he turned round towards the women's side and went and sat down beside Brita. When he sat down she looked up in astonishment. She had not noticed anything before ; now she understood that the other women would not sit next to her. The feeling of deep devotion which had filled her vanished, and she was overwhelmed with sorrow. How would it all end ? how would it all end ? She ought never to have gone back with him.

Her eyes filled with tears, and in order not to break down she took an old Prayer-Book lying on the shelf in front of her and began to read. She turned over both the Gospels and the Epistles without being able to see a word for the tears which she could not keep back. Suddenly she saw something red ; it was a book-mark with a red heart which lay between the leaves. She took it up and pushed it towards Ingmar.

She saw that he kept it in his big hand and took a stolen glance at it. Directly afterwards it lay on the ground. 'What will become of us ? what will become of us ?' thought Brita, and cried over the Prayer-Book.

They went out of the church as soon as the clergyman had left the pulpit. Ingmar harnessed the horse in great haste, and Brita helped him. By the time the blessing was pronounced and the hymn sung, and people were leaving the church, Ingmar and Brita were already well on their way home. The same thought filled them both. Anyone who has committed such a crime cannot live amongst other people. They both felt that people in the church had looked upon them as criminals. 'Neither of us can stand it,' they thought.

In the midst of her great trouble Brita caught a glimpse of Ingmars' Farm, and hardly knew it again, it was such a bright red. She thought of how she had always heard that it should be painted red the year Ingmar married. The wedding had been put off before, because Ingmar thought he could not afford to have it painted. She understood now that he had wished to make every-



thing as good as he could, but it had been too much for him.

When they arrived at Ingmars' Farm it was the dinner-hour.

'Here is the master,' said one of the men, looking out of the window.

Mother Märta hardly raised her heavy eyelids when she got up. 'Stay where you are,' she said; 'none of you need get up from the table.'

The old woman went across the room with heavy steps. The farm hands noticed that she had put on her best clothes, with a silk shawl over her shoulders and a silk kerchief on her head, as if to increase her authority. She was already standing at the door when the carriage pulled up.

Ingmar jumped down at once, but Brita remained sitting. He went over to her side and unbuttoned the apron.

'Won't you get down?'

'No, I can't.' She was weeping bitterly, and held her hands before her face. 'I ought never to have come back,' she said, sobbing.

'You had better come down,' Ingmar said.

'Let me go back to the town; I am not good enough for you.'

Ingmar thought, perhaps, that she was not far from right. He did not say anything, but stood with his hand on the apron and waited.

'What does she say?' asked Mother Märta, who still stood at the entrance.

'She says that she is not good enough for us,' said Ingmar, for Brita sobbed so violently that she could not speak.

'Why does she cry?' asked the old woman.

'Because I am a poor sinner,' sobbed Brita, pressing her hands against her heart. She thought it would break with grief.

'What does she say?' asked the old woman again.

'She says she is a poor sinner,' replied Ingmar.

When Brita heard him repeat her words in a cold and indifferent voice, the truth suddenly flashed upon her. 'No, he could never have stood there and repeated those words to his mother if he had still been fond of her, if he still had the least love left for her. There was no longer any doubt; now she knew what she had wanted to know.

'Why does she not get down?' asked the old woman.

Brita mastered her sobs, and answered distinctly: 'Because I do not want to bring misfortune upon Ingmar.'

'I think she is quite right,' said his mother. 'Let her go,

Little Ingmar. For I tell you that if she does not go, I shall. I will not sleep a single night under the same roof with such a one as she.'

'For God's sake, let me go away!' moaned Brita.

Ingmar swore, turned the carriage, and jumped up. He was sick of it all, and would not struggle any more.

When they had got on to the road they kept meeting people coming from church. It worried Ingmar, and he turned off into a narrow by-road. It was stony and hilly, but one could drive there with only a single horse.

Just as he was turning off the mainroad someone called after him. He looked round; it was the postman holding out a letter. Ingmar took it, put it into his pocket, and drove into the wood.

As soon as he had gone so far into the wood that no one could see him from the road, he pulled up and took out the letter. When Brita saw this she laid her hand on his arm.

'Please do not read it,' she said.

'Why should I not read it?'

'You had better not read it.'

'How do you know that?'

'The letter is from me.'

'Then, you can tell me what it is about?'

'No, that I cannot.'

He looked at her. Her face had grown scarlet and her eyes looked quite wild with fear.

'I think I will read that letter, all the same,' said Ingmar.

He was about to open it, but she tried to snatch it from him. Ingmar, however, held it fast, and tore open the envelope.

'My God!' she moaned, 'am I not to be spared this, either?'

'Oh, Ingmar, read it after I am gone,' she said imploringly.

He had already begun to read it. She laid her hand on the paper. 'Listen, Ingmar; it was the chaplain who made me write it, and he promised not to send it until I had gone on board the steamer, and now he has sent it too soon. You have no right to read it yet. Do let me get away, Ingmar, before you read it.'

Ingmar gave her an angry look, and jumped out of the carriage to read it in peace. She was dreadfully agitated, just as in olden days when she could not have her own way. 'It is not true what I have written in that letter. The chaplain made me write it. I do not love you, Ingmar.' Ingmar looked up from the letter in great wonderment. Brita said no more; the humility she had learnt in prison silenced her. She was not suffering more shame than she had deserved, she thought.

Ingmar stood and puzzled over the letter. Suddenly he crumpled the letter together and groaned. 'I can't make it out,' he said, stamping his foot. 'Everything seems to turn round.' He went up to Brita and seized her by the arm. His voice was rough and angry, and he looked dreadful. Brita sat silent. 'Is it true that there stands in the letter that you love me?' he said, still looking very angry.

'Yes,' she said feebly.

He shook her arm and thrust it from him. 'What lies you can tell!' he said. He laughed loudly and harshly, and his face was horribly drawn.

'God knows!' she said solemnly, 'that I have prayed every day that I might see you before I went away.'

'Where are you going?'

'I suppose I am going to America.'

'The devil you will!'

Ingmar was entirely beside himself; he stumbled a few steps, threw himself down on the ground, and now it was his turn to weep.

Brita went after him, and sat down beside him; she was so happy that she could hardly help laughing aloud. 'Ingmar! Little Ingmar!' she said, calling him by his pet name.

'You, who think I am so ugly!' he said.

'Do I?' Ingmar pushed her hand away. 'Let me tell you all about it.'

'Yes, do.'

'Can you remember what you said in court three years ago?'

'Yes.'

'That if I altered my mind you would marry me?'

'Yes, I remember.'

'It was from that time I began to love you. I never thought anyone could have said such a thing. It was more than human to say it to me, Ingmar, after what I had done to you. When I looked at you that day, I thought that you were the only one with whom it would be good to share one's life. I began to love you so much, and I felt as if you belonged to me and I to you. In the beginning I looked upon it as certain that you would come and fetch me, but later on I dared not believe it.'

Ingmar raised his head. 'Why did you not write?'

'I did write!'

'Yes, to ask me to forgive you; but that was not anything to write about.'

'What ought I to have written?'

'About the other thing.'

'How could I?'

'I had nearly not come.'

'But, Ingmar, I did not dare to send a love-letter, after all I had done! The last day I was in prison I wrote to you, because the chaplain said I must. He took the letter, and promised that you should not have it until I had gone away.'

Ingmar took her hand and laid it on the ground. 'I should like to strike you!' he said.

'You may do with me what you will, Ingmar.'

'I had nearly let you go away.'

'You could not have helped coming.'

'The fact is, I did not love you.'

'That I can quite understand.'

'I felt so glad when I heard you were going to America.'

'Yes; father wrote that he thought you were pleased.'

'When I looked at mother, I thought I could not bring such a daughter-in-law home to her.'

'It will not do, either, Ingmar.'

'I have suffered so much for your sake; people would hardly look at me, because I had treated you so badly.'

'Now you are doing what you threatened to do,' said Brita.

'You have no idea how angry I am with you,' Ingmar answered.

She sat quite still. 'When I think of what I have suffered for days and weeks,' he began again.

'But, Ingmar—'

'It is not that I mean, but I might have let you go away.'

'Did you not love me, Ingmar?'

'No.'

'Not through the whole journey?'

'No, not for a single moment.'

'When did it come back?'

'When I got your letter.'

'I saw your love had gone, and that was why I was so ashamed that you should find out that I loved you.'

Ingmar began to laugh quietly to himself.

'What is it, Ingmar?'

'I am only thinking that we have run away from the church, and been turned out from the Ingmars' farm.'

'And you can laugh at that?'

'Why should I not laugh? I suppose we shall have to live on the highroad as vagabonds. What would father say?'

'To-day you laugh, but it won't do, Ingmar, it won't do, and it is all my fault.'

'It will be all right, for now I don't care a jot for anything except you.'

Brita was nearly crying, but he made her tell him over and over again how much she had thought of him, and how she had longed for him. By-and-bye he grew as quiet as a child listening to a lullaby. It was all so different from what Brita had expected. She had thought that, if he came to meet her when she left the prison, she would at once have spoken to him about what she had done, and how heavy her heart was, because she had been so wicked. She would have told him or her mother, or whoever had fetched her, that she was unworthy of them; they must not think that she considered herself as belonging to them any more. But she had not been able to say anything. At last he said to her very quietly: 'There is something you want to tell me.'

'Yes, there is.'

'You are thinking about it the whole time.'

'Night and day.'

'Tell me all about it, Brita; then we shall be two to bear it.' He sat down and looked at her eyes, which were restless and frightened. They grew quieter as she told him everything. 'Now you feel better,' he said, when she had finished.

'It is as if it had all passed away,' she said.

'It is because we are two to bear it,' he said again. 'Perhaps you do not want to go away now?'

'I should like to stay,' she said, folding her hands.

'Now we will go home,' said Ingmar, rising.

'Oh, I dare not!' said Brita.

'Mother is not so terrible,' said Ingmar, 'when she sees that one has made up one's mind.'

'But I would not on any account drive her from the farm. I do not think there is anything else for it but my going to America.'

'I will tell you something,' said Ingmar, smiling mysteriously; 'you need not be afraid. There is someone who will help us.'

'Who?'

'Father. He will make everything all right.'

There was someone coming along the road. It was Kajsa, but they hardly knew her again, because she was not carrying the yoke with her baskets. 'Good-morning! good-morning!' they said, and the old woman came up and grasped their hands. 'Oh, here you are, and all the folks from Ingmars' Farm are out looking for you.'

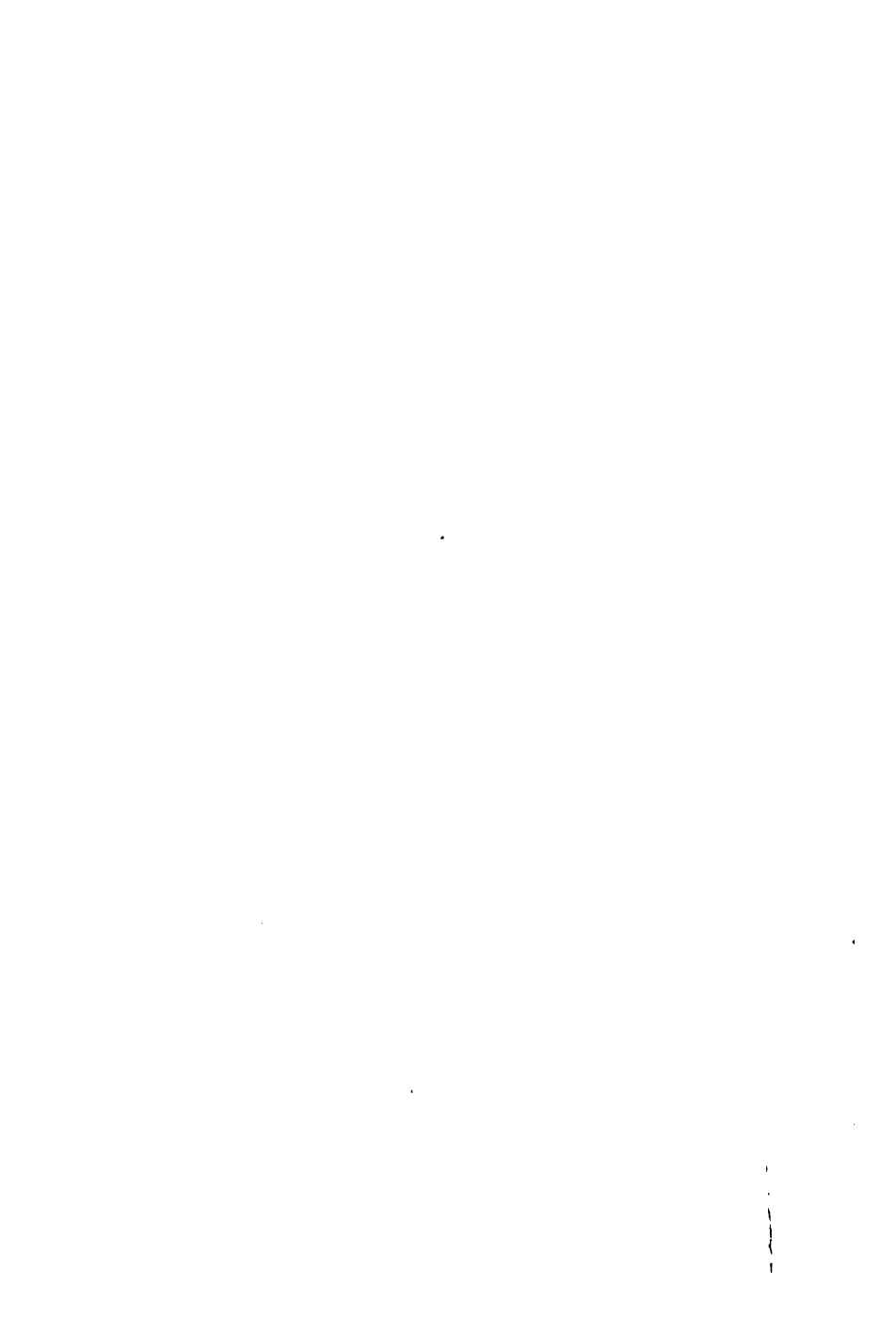
'You were in such a hurry to get away from church,' continued the old woman, 'that I had not time to say good-morning to you ; but I wanted to see Brita, so I went down to the farm. The Dean came up at the same time as I did, and walked straight into the best room, and shouted to Mother Märta before he had even had time to shake hands with her : " Now, Mother Märta—now you can be proud of Ingmar. Now we can all see that he belongs to the old race ; now we must begin to call him Great Ingmar." Mother Märta never says very much ; she stood tying and untying her head-kerchief. " What does the Dean say ? " she said at length. " He has fetched Brita home," said the Dean, " and you may take my word for it, Mother Märta, people will honour him for it as long as he lives." " Oh dear ! oh dear ! " said the old woman. " I nearly lost my place when I saw them sitting in the church ; it was a better sermon than I could ever preach. Ingmar will be an example to us all, as his father was before him." " The Dean brings us great news," said Mother Märta. " Has he not come home yet ? " " No, he is not at home ; but they may have gone to Bergskog first. "'

' Did mother say that ? ' exclaimed Ingmar.

' Yes, she did ; and whilst we were waiting for you she sent the one messenger after the other to try and find you.'

Kajsa went on talking, but Ingmar did not hear what she said, for his thoughts were far away. ' Then I go into the best room,' he thought, ' where father is sitting with all the old Ingmars. " Good-day, Great Ingmar Ingmarsson," says father, coming to meet me. " Good-day, father ; thank you for helping me." " Now you have got a good wife," says father, " everything else will come right." " I should never have done so well had it not been for your help," I say. " There was no art in that," says father. " We Ingmars need only walk in the ways of God. "'

## BOOK I





## CHAPTER I

### AT THE SCHOOLMASTER'S

IN the parish where the old Ingmars lived there was, in the beginning of the eighties, not a single soul who thought it possible to accept a new faith, or attend a service, different from the one to which they had always been accustomed. They certainly now and then had heard that new sects had sprung up in other Dalar parishes, and that there were people who walked into rivers and lakes, and allowed themselves to be baptized according to the new rites of the Baptists; but they only laughed at it, and said: 'That kind of thing may, perhaps, suit the people who live at Appelbo and at Gagnef, but we shall never see anything of that kind in our parish.'

In the same way as people in the parish kept up all other old customs, they were also very strict about going to church every Sunday. Everybody went who possibly could, even when the winter was at its hardest. In fact, it was more necessary then than at any other time. It would have been impossible to sit in the cold church with forty degrees Centigrade of cold outside unless the people had been very closely packed together.

But it was not because the sermon was so very excellent that the congregation was so large. The clergyman was a good man, but it could not be said of him that he had any special gift for explaining the Word of God. At that time one went to church to honour God, and not to enjoy a beautiful sermon. On the way home, when fighting against the biting wind, one thought: 'Our Lord is sure to have noticed you have been to church to-day in this terrible weather.'

That was the main thing; it was not their concern that the clergyman said the same thing almost every Sunday, which he had been saying ever since he came into the parish.

To tell the truth, however, most of them were perfectly satisfied with what they heard in church. They knew that what the Pastor

read to them was the Word of God, and therefore they found it beautiful. It was only the schoolmaster or one or two of the most enlightened older peasants that now and again said to each other: 'Our Pastor has really not more than one sermon. He speaks of nothing else but God's providence and God's guidance. It does not matter so much as long as Dissenters keep away; but it is no use denying that our fortress is badly defended at present, and that it would fall at the very first attack.'

It really was the case that the lay-preachers, who travelled about, all went past their parish. 'It was of no use going there,' they said. 'The people there do not wish to hear of any awakening.' Both the lay-preachers and their followers in the neighbouring parishes consequently looked upon the old Ingmars and the other people in the parish as great sinners, and, when they heard their church-bells ring, declared that it was to the tune of 'Sleep in your sins—sleep in your sins.'

All the people in the parish, both old and young, were very indignant when they heard their bells spoken about in this manner. They knew there was not a person in the parish who did not say the Lord's Prayer when the church-bells rang. And every evening at six o'clock, when the bells rang, all work ceased, both in the house and in the fields; the men took off their hats, the women curtsied, and everybody stood quietly for as long as it would take to say the Lord's Prayer. Anyone who had lived in that parish must also own that they had never before felt so deeply that God's was the kingdom, the power, and the glory as when, on a summer evening, they suddenly saw the scythes rest and the ploughs stop in the middle of a furrow, and the load of corn pull up on the way to the barn, only for the sake of a few strokes of a bell. It was as if they knew that our Lord at that moment hovered over the parish on an evening cloud, great and mighty and good, bestowing His blessings. . . .

In that parish they had not yet got a schoolmaster who had been to the high school; they had an old-fashioned teacher who was only a peasant, and who had taught himself all he knew. He was a capable man, who single-handed managed to teach more than a hundred children. He had been schoolmaster for more than thirty years, and was greatly respected. The schoolmaster almost felt as if the welfare of the whole parish rested with him. And he began to feel uneasy, because they had a pastor who did not know how to preach. He kept quiet, however, as long as it was only a question of introducing a new form of baptism in the other parishes, but when he heard that they had also begun to

alter the administration of the Communion, and that people assembled in private houses to partake of the Sacrament, he could no longer remain inactive. He himself was poor, but he succeeded in persuading some of the more well-to-do peasants to build him a mission-house. 'You know me,' he said to them. 'I only want to preach in order to strengthen people in the old faith. For how will it all end if the lay-preachers come upon us with their new baptism and their new Communion, and there is no one to tell the people what is true and what is false teaching?'

The schoolmaster was as well thought of by the clergyman as by everybody else. He and the Pastor often walked backwards and forwards between the parsonage and the school, backwards and forwards, backwards and forwards, as if they never could be finished with all they had to talk about. The Pastor also paid frequent visits at the schoolmaster's in the evening, and sat in the kitchen near the big fireplace, and talked to Mother Stina, the schoolmaster's wife. At times he came night after night. He had a very sad home; his wife was always ill in bed, so there was neither order nor comfort in his house.

One winter evening the schoolmaster and his wife were sitting near the fireplace, silent and grave, and in a corner of the room a little girl, about twelve years of age, was playing. Her name was Gertrud, and she was the schoolmaster's daughter. She had very fair, almost white hair, rosy, round cheeks, but she did not look so bright nor so prematurely wise as schoolmasters' children generally do.

The corner where she was sitting was her playroom; there she had gathered together a collection of different things—small pieces of coloured glass, broken teacups, small round stones from the riverside, small pieces of wood, and many things of the same kind.

She had been allowed to sit for a long time and play; neither her father nor her mother had disturbed her. She was building something with her pieces of glass and wood, and she was very busy, and greatly afraid lest she should be reminded of lessons and work. It was delightful, she thought, that father did not seem to be going to ask her to do any extra sums with him that evening.

She had a great work in hand in her little corner. Nothing less than building a whole parish. She would make the whole parish, with both church and school. She would also make the river and the bridge; she would make everything just as it was. She had already done quite a very little. The range of mountains which surrounded the whole parish were made of large and small stones. In the crevices she had planted forests with small twigs

of fir, and towards the north she had placed two pointed stones ; they were the Bell Mountain and Olof's Peak, which rose one on each side of the river, and towered over the whole valley.

The round valley between the mountains was covered with mould from one of her mother's flower-pots, and so far all was well ; but she could not make it green and nice as it should be. Then she comforted herself with the thought that she could play that it was in the spring before the grass and corn had begun to appear.

The river, however, that flowed broad and beautiful through the parish she had been able to manage very well with a long narrow piece of glass, and the long floating-bridge which connected the two halves of the parish already lay floating on the river.

The more distant villages and farmhouses had already been marked out by bits of red brick. Towards the north, between fields and meadows, lay the Ingmars' farm ; but the village of Kolasen was right to the east, close to the mountain slope, and Bergsana factory was furthest south, where the river, with falls and cataracts, made its way out of the valley through the mountain ridge.

She was really ready with all the outside work. The roads, well gravelled, wended their way along the riverside and between the farmsteads. Here and there on the flat plain and near the houses were planted trees. The little girl had only to cast a glance over all she had made from stones and mould and twigs of fir, and she at once saw the whole parish lying before her. She thought it was beautiful.

Time after time she raised her head to call her mother, and show her the wonderful things she had made, but she always thought better of it. It was perhaps wiser not to remind them that she was there.

The part that was left was the most difficult of all. It was the church with the village, lying in the middle of the parish, on each side of the river. She was obliged to arrange and rearrange her little bits of stone and glass before she made everything fit in. The magistrate's house was inclined to push the storekeeper's to one side, and there was no room for the solicitor's, next door to the doctor's. There was so much to remember : the apothecary's, the post-office, and the Pastor's house, large farmsteads with long outhouses, and the inn, and the land-agent's house, and the telegraph-station, and the tobacco factory.

At last the whole of the village was ready, with its white-and-red houses ; now there was only one single thing left. She had

worked hard with all this, in order to be able to begin with the school-house, which also had to be put in the village.

She wanted lots of room for the school. It should stand high above the river, a large two-storied house, with a big garden and a tall flagstaff in the yard.

She had kept her best pieces of wood for the school-house, and, all the same, she had to speculate a long time as to how she could best manage it. She would have liked to have built it just as it was, with one big school-room in each story, and with the kitchen and the room in which she and her parents lived. 'But that would take a long time; they will never leave me in peace long enough for that,' she thought.

Steps were heard in the entrance. Someone was stamping the snow from off his boots. The little girl suddenly became busy again with her building. 'Here is the Pastor coming to talk with father and mother; now I shall have the whole evening to myself;' and with renewed courage she began to lay the foundation of a school as big as half the parish.

Her mother had also heard the steps. She was sitting at her spinning-wheel. She got up and pulled an old easy-chair towards the fireplace. Turning to her husband, she said: 'Are you going to tell him to-night?'

'Yes,' answered the schoolmaster, 'as soon as I have an opportunity.'

The Pastor came in almost frozen with cold, and pleased with the prospect of sitting close to a good fire. He was very talkative as usual. It was difficult to imagine a pleasanter man than the Pastor, when he came to have his evening chat. He spoke fluently and easily enough about everything belonging to this world; one could hardly believe it was the same man who had such difficulty in preaching. But if one only spoke with him about things belonging to the next world, he grew red in the face, could never find words, and never said anything worth listening to.

As the Pastor was sitting there, the schoolmaster turned towards him and said cheerfully: 'I must tell you, sir, that I am going to build a mission-house.'

The Pastor grew quite pale; he simply sank back in his chair. 'Whatever do you mean, Storm?' he said. 'Are they going to build a mission-house here? Then, what do they want with me and the church? Are they going to do away with us?'

'We have good use both for the church and the Pastor, all the same,' said the schoolmaster with warmth. 'It is my intention that the mission-house shall support the church. There are so

many false teachers going about the country that the church is in need of help.'

'I thought you were my friend, Storm,' said the Pastor sorrowfully. A short time before he had come into the house confident and happy; now he seemed to give way, as if he were done for altogether.

The schoolmaster understood quite well why the Pastor was so overcome. He and everybody else knew that once upon a time the Pastor had been brilliantly gifted, but in his younger days he had led a very fast life, and he had had a stroke, and had never been the same man since. He generally forgot that he was only the ruin of a man, but whenever he was reminded of it he was seized by the deepest despondency. He now sat almost as if unconscious, in the easy-chair, and it was a long time before anyone ventured to speak.

'The Pastor must not take it in that way,' said the schoolmaster at last, trying to make his voice very gentle and soft.

'Hush, Storm!' said the Pastor. 'I know I have been but a poor Pastor, but I did not think you would take the living from me.'

Storm made a dissenting movement with his hands. That had certainly not been his intention, but he dare not say anything.

The schoolmaster was at that time about fifty years old, but, in spite of all the work he had taken upon himself, he was still in the prime of his strength. He was a complete contrast to the Pastor. Storm was as tall a man as any in Dalarne; his black hair curled on his forehead; his complexion was as dark as copper, and his features sharply cut. He looked like a giant beside the Pastor, who was little, narrow-chested, and bald-headed.

The schoolmaster's wife thought that her husband, as the stronger, ought to give in; she made a sign to him that he should abandon his plan, but, although he was much grieved, he showed no intention of doing so.

The schoolmaster began to speak very slowly and very clearly. He said he was quite sure it would not be very long before false teaching made its way into the parish. He said a place was needed where they could speak to the people in a more downright manner than was suitable in the church, a place where one could choose one's own text,\* explain the whole Bible, and expound to the people its most difficult passages.

His wife again made signs to him that he should be silent. She felt at every word he said that the Pastor must think: 'I, then,

\* In Scandinavia the clergyman always chooses his text from the Gospel of the day.

have not instructed them ; I have not been a shield against unbelief. I must have been but a poor Pastor, when my own schoolmaster, a peasant who has taught himself everything he knows, thinks he can do better than I.'

But the schoolmaster was not to be silenced ; he went on speaking about all that must be done in order to protect the flock before the wolves came upon them.

'But I do not see any wolves,' said the Pastor.

'But I know they are on the track,' said Storm.

'And it is you, Storm, who are paving the way for them.' The Pastor straightened himself in his chair. The schoolmaster's words had made him angry. His face grew red, and he regained a little of his dignity.

'My dear Storm, do not let us talk any more about it,' he said. He turned to the schoolmaster's wife and began to speak pleasantly to her about the pretty bride she had dressed for the wedding the other day ; for Mother Stina always dressed the brides in the parish. Mother Stina, although a peasant woman, quite understood what a terrible grief his own weakness must be to the Pastor. She cried from pity, and could not answer for tears, so the Pastor had to carry on the whole conversation. The whole time the Pastor was thinking : 'If only I had the power and strength of my youth, then I could easily have convinced this peasant of the wickedness of his plan. Suddenly he turned to the schoolmaster. 'Where have you got the money from, Storm ? I know you are only a poor man.'

'We have formed a committee,' said Storm ; and he mentioned the names of some of the peasants who had promised to help him, in order to show the Pastor that they were people who would not wish to do any harm to the church nor to him.

'So Ingmar Ingmarsson is amongst them !' said the Pastor, and it seemed as if this gave him a fresh blow. 'And I, who relied upon Ingmar Ingmarsson just as much as I did upon you.' He said no more about the matter ; he turned again to the housewife and began to talk. He saw she was crying, but he took no notice of it. But he could not refrain from speaking of the matter, and again turned to the schoolmaster. 'Leave it alone, Storm,' he said beseechingly—'leave it alone, for my sake. How would you like it, Storm, if someone came and built a school next door to yours ?'

The schoolmaster sat a little while in silence. 'I cannot, sir,' he said, trying to look unconcerned.

The Pastor said nothing, and there was complete silence for a

long time. Then the Pastor got up, put on his fur coat and cap, and walked towards the door.

The whole time he had been struggling to find words which would convince Storm that he was doing wrong, not only to his Pastor, but that he would also do great harm to the whole parish by this undertaking. But although his head was full of words and thoughts, he could not give expression to them nor argue clearly; he knew he was a beaten man.

As he walked towards the door he discovered Gertrud, who was still sitting in her corner playing with her bits of glass and brick. He stopped to look at her. She had evidently not heard a word of the conversation; her eyes shone with delight, and her cheeks were rosier than usual.

The Pastor was struck by the contrast between the light-heartedness of the child and his own heavy trouble, and went up to her. 'What are you making?' he said.

The little girl had finished building the parish long ago. She had already pulled it down and begun something new.

'If only the Pastor had come a little earlier,' the child said. 'I had made such a beautiful parish, with both church and school.'

'What has become of it?'

'Oh, I have destroyed the parish, and now I am building Jerusalem, and——'

'What?' said the Pastor sharply. 'Have you destroyed the parish in order to build Jerusalem?'

'Yes,' answered Gertrud, 'it was such a beautiful parish; but we read about Jerusalem in school yesterday, and now I have pulled down the parish to build Jerusalem.'

'It is assuredly someone greater than you who is speaking through your mouth,' said the Pastor quite overcome. He stood looking into space and talking to himself. 'Ah,' he said, 'it must be so. It is Thou who movest in this.'

He went up to the schoolmaster, and said in his usual friendly manner, and with a new, clear expression in his eyes: 'I am no longer angry with you, Storm. You are only doing what you feel you must. I see that now. I do not know what it is, but assuredly something wonderful is going to happen to us. God showed His goodness to me when He let me see it.'



## CHAPTER II

### ‘AND THEY SAW HEAVEN OPEN’

DURING the spring that they were building the mission-house, the thaw set in very suddenly, and the Dalar River rose to an unusual height. It was quite surprising to see the quantity of water there was that year. It rained from heaven, it rushed down the mountains in great streams, it welled out of the earth, there was water in every wheel-rut and in every furrow; it seemed as if it were everywhere. All the water tried to make its way down to the river, which swelled higher and higher, and rushed onwards with greater and greater force. It was not dark and bright and still as it generally was, but a grayish-yellow from all the muddy water that flowed into it, and it looked strangely weird and threatening as it came surging along, full of planks and ice-blocks.

In the beginning people did not take much notice of the spring flood; it was only the children who hurried down to the riverside whenever they had time, and watched the raging river and all it carried along.

It was soon not only timber and ice-blocks; there were other things besides. It came rushing along with washing-bridges and bathing-houses, and before long it brought with it boats and portions of the washed-away floating-bridges.

‘It will soon be taking our bridge, that it will,’ said the children. They were a little afraid, but the pleasure that something wonderful was going to happen predominated, all the same.

Suddenly a large fir-tree came floating with roots and branches, and after it sailed an aspen with its white stem, and from the banks one could see that the thick branches had big buds, which had swelled by being so long in the water. And quite close behind the trees came a small hayshed, bottom upwards. It was still full of hay and straw, and floated on its roof as a boat floats on its keel.

But when that kind of thing began to float past, the grown-up

people also became interested. They saw that the river had overflowed its banks somewhere north, and hastened down to the riverside with poles and boat-hooks, in order to pull on shore implements and buildings.

Close to the northern boundary of the parish, where there were only few houses and few people, Ingmar Ingmarsson stood by the river. He was now somewhat over fifty, and looked older than his years. His face was rough and furrowed, his back was bent, and he had the same awkward, helpless look that he had always had.

He stood leaning on a long, heavy boat-hook, looking at the river with dull and sleepy eyes. The river surged and frothed, and rushed proudly past him with all it had robbed from its banks. It looked as if it were mocking the peasant for his slowness, and it was as if it said, 'It will not be you who will wrest from me anything I have carried away.'

Ingmar allowed floating-bridges and boat-hulls to sail close past him without making an attempt to rescue them. 'They will be sure to get hold of them down in the village,' he thought.

All the same, he did not take his eyes from the river, but noticed everything which drifted past. Suddenly something bright and yellow came floating down the river some distance off on some boards fastened together, and he discovered it immediately. 'I have been expecting that a long time,' he said aloud to himself. He could not yet see what the yellow was, but it was easy for anyone who knew how the Dalar children were dressed to guess what it might be. 'Some children have again been playing on a washing-bridge,' he thought, 'and they have not had the sense to get on to the shore before the river took them.'

It was not long before the peasant saw he had guessed aright. He could distinctly see three small children in yellow wadmal frocks and round yellow caps come sailing down the river on a fragile wooden bridge, which was being slowly broken up by the river and the ice.

The children were still a long way off, but Ingmar knew there was a bend in the current close to where he stood. If it pleased God that the bridge with the children came into this current, it was not impossible that he might be able to save them.

He stood quite still, looking over the river; then it seemed as if someone gave the bridge a push; it turned and came gliding towards him. The children were now so close that he could see their small frightened faces and hear them crying.

But they were still too far out for him to reach them with the

boat-hook. He hurried down to the water's edge and began to wade into the river.

As he did so he had a strange feeling as if someone were calling him back. 'You are not a young man any longer, Ingmar; you may perhaps be risking your life.'

He hesitated a moment and considered whether he had any right to risk his life. His wife, whom he had once fetched home from prison, had died a month or two ago, and since then his only wish had been that he might soon follow her. On the other hand, his son, who would take over the farm after him, was not yet grown up; it was his duty, he thought, to put up with life a little longer for his sake.

'It must in any case be as God wills,' he said.

Great Ingmar was now neither awkward nor slow. When he walked into the surging river, he planted his boat-hook firmly in the bottom, so as not to be carried away by the current, and he also kept a watchful eye upon the timber and the large pieces of ice that drifted past, that they should not strike him. When the raft with the children on it neared him, he pressed his feet firmly down in the sand, and succeeded in getting hold of it with the boat-hook.

'Hold on fast!' he shouted to the children, for at the same moment the raft turned sharply round and its frail planks creaked. But the fragile bridge kept together, and Great Ingmar succeeded in hauling it out of the strongest current. Then he let go of it, for he knew that it would now drift on shore by itself.

He again put the boat-hook firmly down, and turned round in order to get back to the bank. But he did not notice a heavy plank which came rushing along. It struck him in the side, below the arm.

It was a terrible blow, for the plank was hurled against him with tremendous force, but Great Ingmar held on to the boat-hook and managed to get on to the shore. When he again stood on the bank he hardly dared to feel his body; he had a sensation as if his chest were quite crushed. His mouth suddenly filled with blood. 'It is all over with you, Great Ingmar,' he thought. He could not go a step further, and sank down on the ground.

It was the small children whom he had rescued who cried for help. People heard them, and he was carried home. . . .

The Pastor was sent for to Ingmars' Farm, and he stayed there the whole afternoon. When he came home in the evening he went across to the schoolmaster's, for he had heard something which he felt he must speak about.

The schoolmaster and his wife were much grieved, for they had already heard that Ingmar Ingmarsson was dead. The Pastor, on the other hand, walked with a light step, and there was an almost exalted look upon his face when he entered the room.

The schoolmaster asked at once if he had been in time.

'Yes,' answered the Pastor, 'but there was no need for me there.'

'Was there not?' said Mother Stina.

'No,' answered the Pastor, smiling in a mysterious manner; 'he could manage quite well without me. It is often hard to sit by a death-bed,' said the Pastor.

'I know it is,' nodded the schoolmaster.

'Yes, and especially when it is the foremost man in the parish.'

'Just so.'

'But things can also be very different from what one had expected.'

The Pastor sat still for a little while with a preoccupied look on his face; his eyes looked brighter than usual behind his spectacles.

'Have you, Storm, or you, Mother Stina, heard of the wonderful thing which happened to Great Ingmar when he was young?' asked the Pastor.

The schoolmaster answered that they had heard so many things about him.

'Yes, of course you have; but this is the most wonderful of all. Great Ingmar had a friend who lives in one of the houses belonging to his farm,' said the Pastor.

'Yes, I know,' said the schoolmaster. 'He is also called Ingmar, and people call him Strong Ingmar, to make a difference between them.'

'Yes,' said the Pastor, 'his father called him Ingmar in honour of the old family. One Saturday evening, at midsummer,' continued the Pastor, 'when Great Ingmar was a young man, he and his friend Strong Ingmar, after their work was done, put on their Sunday clothes and went down to the village to enjoy themselves.' The Pastor stopped and meditated. 'I can imagine,' he said, 'what a beautiful evening it must have been, quite still, with a clear sky, one of those evenings when the earth and the sky seem to change colour, the sky almost becoming light green and the earth being covered by light mists that give everything a bluish-white tinge. When these two, Great Ingmar and Strong Ingmar, came down to the village and went across the floating-bridge, they were surprised at not seeing anybody walking about as they usually did on a summer evening, nor did they hear any music or other

noise from the village, but it seemed as if these two were quite alone in the world. All at once something made them lift their eyes, and they both saw heaven open. The whole firmament appeared to divide from east to west. And the two stood hand-in-hand on the middle of the bridge, and beheld all the glory of heaven. Have you ever heard anything like it, Mother Stina, or you, Storm?" said the Pastor. "These two, Great Ingmar and Strong Ingmar, stood on the bridge and saw heaven open. I don't think they have ever before spoken about it to strangers, but the memory of it has been their greatest treasure, their inviolable sanctuary. They have only spoken vaguely about it to their children and their nearest." The Pastor again sat silent for awhile; then he sighed deeply. "I never have heard anything like it," he said. His voice trembled a little as he continued: "I wish I had stood on the bridge with Great Ingmar and Strong Ingmar, and seen heaven open. To-day as soon as they had brought Great Ingmar home to the farm," said the Pastor, "he asked them to send for Strong Ingmar, and they did so at once, at the same time as they sent for the doctor and myself. But Strong Ingmar was not at home. He was away in the forest felling trees, and was not easy to find. They sent the one messenger after the other, and Great Ingmar was very restless, for he was afraid he should not see his friend before he died. I came, and the doctor came, but they had not yet been able to find Strong Ingmar. Great Ingmar did not take much notice of us; he was very near death. "I shall soon be dead, Pastor," he said. "I only wish that I might be allowed to see Strong Ingmar before I die." He was lying on the broad bed in the little room with all his clothes on. His eyes were open, and the whole time he appeared to be looking at something which was far away, and which no one else saw. The three small children whom he had rescued had been put on to the bed, and they sat huddled together at his feet. When he now and again turned his eyes from what he saw far away, his glance fell upon the children, and then a smile came over his face. At last they had succeeded in finding Strong Ingmar, and a contented smile lighted up Great Ingmar's face when he heard his friend's heavy step in the best room. When he came up to the bed, Great Ingmar took his hand and stroked it gently; then he asked him: "Do you remember, Ingmar, when you and I stood on the bridge near the church and saw heaven open?" "Yes, verily I do remember when you and I looked into heaven," said Strong Ingmar. Then Great Ingmar turned right round to him; he smiled, and his face shone with

a great joy. "Now I am going there," he said to Strong Ingmar. Then the other bent low down and looked straight into his eyes. "I shall come after," he said. Great Ingmar nodded to him. "But you know that I cannot come until your son has returned from his pilgrimage." "Yes, I know," said Great Ingmar and nodded. After this he sighed deeply once or twice, and was dead.

The schoolmaster and his wife agreed with the Pastor that it was a beautiful death. They all sat in silence for some time.

'But,' said Mother Stina suddenly, 'what did Strong Ingmar mean when he spoke about the pilgrimage?'

The Pastor looked up confused. 'I do not know,' he said. 'Great Ingmar died immediately after; I have not had time to think it over.'

'You are quite right, mother, they were strange words,' said Storm.

'I suppose the Pastor knows that people say Strong Ingmar can see into the future?'

'Is God's hand over us also in this?' exclaimed the Pastor. 'Assuredly He wills something great with this parish! I do not understand what it is, but I do understand that Great Ingmar had to die for the sake of it.'

## CHAPTER III

### KARIN INGMARSDOTTER

#### I

THE summer was nearly over, and school had again begun. The children were having a few minutes' play, and the schoolmaster and Gertrud had gone into the kitchen; they sat down at the table, and Mother Stina brought them some coffee. Gertrud tried to drink her coffee, hot as it was, in order to go and play with the other children, but before she had finished her cup the door opened and someone came in.

It was Halvor Halvorsson, a young peasant who had lately begun business in the village. He came from Tims Farm, and was therefore called Tims Halvor Halvorsson, or simply Tims Halvor.

As soon as Tims Halvor entered the room Gertrud began to drink her coffee more slowly. Mother Stina offered Halvor a cup of coffee. He sat down to the table and began to talk to the schoolmaster. Gertrud sat quite still and listened. Halvor spoke so nicely it almost sounded like singing.

'This is hard upon Gertrud,' said her father teasingly; 'now she can't go out and play at being "widow."'

Gertrud grew scarlet, and did not know what to do with herself, but Tims Halvor stroked her hair, and said: 'Never mind, Gertrud—you stay here; you may soon enough have to play at being widow.'

This he said very quietly and gently. Gertrud knew what he was thinking about. She felt all at once so touched that she could almost have cried.

Mother Stina sat at the window knitting; from where she was sitting she could see right down the road. She suddenly grew as red as Gertrud, and bent forward to see better.

'Well I never!' she said to herself. She immediately tried to

look unconcerned, and said in an off-hand manner: 'The great folks seem to be about to-day.'

Tims Halvor at once noticed that there was something peculiar in her voice, and he got up and looked out. Gertrud also turned round: she saw a tall woman, who stooped a little, and a half-grown lad coming towards the school.

'Is not that Karin Ingmarsdotter?' said Mother Stina. 'I don't believe she has been to the school-house since she was a little girl, carrying her sandwiches wrapped up in her kerchief.'

'Yes, it is she,' Halvor said. He made no further remark, but turned from the window, and looked round the room, as if trying to find some way of escape; but he shrugged his shoulders and went back to his seat.

The fact was that last summer, when Ingmar Ingmarsson was still alive, Tims Halvor had proposed to Karin Ingmarsdotter. They had been a long time arranging the matter, and much was said both for and against it. The old family at Ingmars' Farm did not know if he was good enough. It was not the money, for Halvor was rich; but his father had been given to drink, and his mother had been a little strange; they were afraid he might inherit his parents' failings. At last, however, it was reported that he was an accepted son-in-law of the Ingmars.

The wedding-day was fixed, and they had arranged for the banns to be published. But before they had been read for the first time, Karin and Halvor went to Falun to buy the wedding-ring and the hymn-book. They were away for three days, and when they came back Karin told her father that she could not marry Halvor. Ingmar Ingmarsson was the only person who ever knew what her reason had been for refusing to marry him. It was probably only because he had taken more than was good for him on some occasion during the journey. Karin thought he might grow like his father, and that had made her afraid. Great Ingmar said that he would not compel her, and so the engagement was at an end.

But Halvor was quite beside himself. 'It will be such a disgrace,' he said to Karin, 'that I cannot bear it. What will people think of me when you throw me over in this way? You can't behave like this to an honourable man?'

But nothing could make Karin change her mind, and since that time Halvor had been very depressed and unhappy; he could not forget the wrong they had done him. And now Karin was entering the room where Halvor was sitting, and how would it all end? One thing was certain: a reconciliation was out of the



question. Karin last autumn had married Elias Elof Ersson. Since the death of Ingmar Ingmarsson in the spring, she and her husband had lived at Ingmars' Farm, and had had the management of it. Great Ingmar had left six daughters and one son; but the son was not grown up, so he could not take over the farm.

Gertrud was very much taken up with the thought of all this; she was just as uncomfortable as the others.

When Karin entered the room, Gertrud was quite pleased to see how plain she was, and how she seemed to crawl through the room. Why could she not walk straight like other people, and open her eyes properly? Gertrud did not like her at all, and said to herself: 'I am glad you did not get Tims Halvor. I am very glad you did not get him.'

In the meantime Karin stood in the middle of the room. Her face did not show the slightest emotion when she saw Tims Halvor; but she went slowly and quietly about saying good-day. When she put out her hand to Halvor, he put out his, and they just touched each other with their finger-tips. Karin always stooped a little; when she stood opposite Halvor she seemed to stoop more than usual, but Halvor straightened himself and raised his head.

'Karin has come down to the village to-day,' said Mother Stina, offering her the Pastor's chair.

'Yes, I have,' she answered; 'it is not much of a walk now the frost has set in.'

'There has been a hard frost during the night,' said Mother Stina.

Then there was a dead silence; no one seemed to have anything to say. This continued for a minute or two. Then Halvor got up; it seemed quite to startle the others.

'I shall have to be going,' said Halvor.

'Oh, there is no such hurry,' remarked Mother Stina.

'I hope Halvor is not going on my account?' said Karin. Her voice sounded more humble than it usually did when she said this.

Tims Halvor straightened himself still more; he went round with a hard, proud look, shook hands with them all, and said good-bye.

As soon as he left the room, it was as if the spell were broken, and the schoolmaster knew at once what to say. He looked at the boy Karin had brought with her, and of whom no one had taken any notice. He was a little fellow not much older than Gertrud. He had a nice and gentle face; but there was an old-

fashioned look about his mouth, and it was easy to see to what family he belonged.

'I think Karin has brought a new scholar with her,' said the schoolmaster.

'It is my brother,' Karin answered; 'now he is Ingmar Ingmarsson.'

'He is rather little for that name,' said Storm.

'Yes, father died too soon.'

'He did indeed,' said the schoolmaster and his wife both at once.

'He has been to the big school at Falun,' Karin said. 'This is why he has not been to see the schoolmaster before.'

'Can it not be arranged that he goes back in the autumn?'

Karin looked down and sighed. 'They say he is clever at his books,' she said.

'I am only afraid that I can't teach him anything. I expect he knows as much as I do.'

'Oh, the schoolmaster knows much more than such a little fellow as that.'

Then there was again silence. At last she said: 'I not only want him to come to school here, but I would also ask the schoolmaster and Mother Stina if he might live with them.'

The schoolmaster and his wife looked at each other in surprise; neither of them had an answer ready.

'We have not much room, you know,' said Storm.

'I thought that I might perhaps pay you in butter and milk and eggs,' said Karin.

'Oh, as to that——'

'It would be a great favour,' said the rich peasant woman.

But suddenly all Mother Stina's objections ceased. Karin Ingmarsdotter would never have asked for anything so strange if she had not had very good reasons for doing so, she thought.

'Karin need not say any more,' she said. 'We will do all that we can for the Ingmarssons.'

'Thank you,' Karin said.

Mother Stina and Karin talked for some time as to what arrangements should be made for Ingmar, whilst Storm and Gertrud took the boy with them into the school-room, and there he sat down next to Gertrud. The whole of the first day he never said a word.

## II

TIMS HALVOR did not go near the school-house for a whole week ; it was as if he were afraid of meeting Ingmar. But one morning, when it was pouring with rain and there was no likelihood of any customers coming, he could not keep away any longer. He was so terribly depressed that he felt as if he might just as well go and hang himself. 'I am not good for anything ; no one has any respect for me,' he thought, beginning to torment himself as he had done ever since Karin threw him over. 'I really can't stand it any longer,' he said to himself. 'I must go over and see Mother Storm, perhaps she can cheer me a little.'

Then he closed his empty shop, buttoned his greatcoat, and went on his way to the school, through storm and rain, down the sloppy road.

Halvor had not meant to stay very long at the schoolmaster's, but he felt so comforted that he was still there when the school-bell rang and Storm and the two children came in for their morning coffee. They went up and said good-day to him. He stood up to greet the schoolmaster, but when Ingmar would have shaken hands with him he had already sat down, and was talking so busily with Mother Stina that he did not notice it. The boy stood still for a moment ; then he went up to the table and sat down. He sighed once or twice just as his sister had sighed the day she was there.

'Halvor has come to show us his new watch,' Mother Stina said.

Halvor took a new silver watch out of his pocket and showed it to them. It was a pretty little watch, with a gilt flower on the back. The schoolmaster opened it, went into the schoolroom for a magnifying glass, stuck it in his eye, and began to examine the works. It pleased him to see how beautifully it worked, and he said he had never seen better workmanship. He gave it back to Halvor, who put it in his pocket, but he neither looked pleased nor proud as people generally do when their purchases are praised.

Ingmar was silent during the meal, as he always was ; but when he had finished his coffee he asked Storm whether he understood anything about watches.

'Yes,' said the schoolmaster. 'Don't you know that I understand everything ?'

Ingmar then took out a watch which he carried in his waistcoat pocket. It was a big, old-fashioned silver watch, and looked

very clumsy compared with Halvor's watch, and it was fastened to a chain which was also old and clumsy. The back was quite plain, and, what was worse, it was dented on the one side. Altogether, the watch was very much the worse for wear. There was no glass, and the face of the watch was damaged.

'It has stopped,' said the schoolmaster, holding it to his ear.

'Yes,' said the boy. 'I only want to know if the schoolmaster thinks it can be mended.'

The schoolmaster shook it, and one could hear how it rattled inside as if all the wheels were loose.

'You must have been hammering nails with it,' he said. 'I don't think I can do anything with it.'

'Does the schoolmaster think that Erik the watchmaker can mend it?'

'No, no more than I can. You had better send it to Falun and have new works put in it.'

'I thought as much,' Ingmar said, and took the watch.

'What in the world have you been doing with it?' said the schoolmaster.

The boy was silent a moment. It seemed as if something were choking him.

'It was father's watch,' he said. 'It became like this when the plank struck father.' They all grew very still and attentive, and the boy made an effort and continued: 'I was the first to reach father when he lay on the bank,' said the boy. 'And when I came father was lying with the watch in his hand. "It is all over with me, Ingmar," said father, and beckoned me to come near to him, for he could not bear to speak loudly. "Ingmar," father said, "I am sorry the watch has gone to pieces, for I wish you to give it to someone that I have treated badly. Tell him so from me." Then father told me to whom I was to give the watch, and he said that when the Easter holidays were over, and I went back to Falun, I should see about getting it mended before I gave it to the person who was to have it. But I never went back to Falun, and now I don't know what I am to do.'

The schoolmaster began to speculate whether he knew anyone who was going to Falun soon, and who would take the watch, but Mother Stina interrupted him.

'Who was to have the watch, Ingmar?'

'I don't know if I ought to tell,' answered the boy.

'Was it Tims Halvor, who is sitting there?' she asked.

Ingmar hesitated before he answered. 'Yes, it was,' he answered softly.

'Then you give Halvor the watch just as it is,' said Mother Stina; 'he would like that best.'

Ingmar rose obediently, took out the watch, and rubbed it once or twice with his coat-sleeve, as if to make it as nice as possible. Then he went across the floor with long steps. 'Father told me I was to give you this,' he said, and handed him the watch.

Tims Halvor had been sitting in morose silence all this time, but when the boy went up to him he put his hand before his eyes as if he did not want to see him. Ingmar stood some time before him, holding out the watch. At last he looked at Mother Stina, as if asking her help.

'Blessed are the meek,' she said.

Tims Halvor made a movement with his hand as if to refuse the gift. Then the schoolmaster put in his word.

'I don't think you can expect greater amends, Halvor,' he said. 'I have always said that if Ingmar Ingmarsson had lived he would long ago have made the reparation which was due to you.'

They saw that Halvor grasped the watch almost as if against his will, and drew it towards him, but as soon as he held it in his hand he put it in the inside pocket of his waistcoat.

'He does not mean anyone to take that watch from him,' said Storm, laughing, when he saw how carefully Halvor buttoned his coat and waistcoat.

Halvor laughed too. He stood up, straightened himself, and took a deep breath. The colour came to his cheeks, and he looked round with bright, clear eyes.

'Now Halvor feels as if he were another man,' said Mother Stina.

Halvor took out his own new watch, and went across to Ingmar, who had again sat down at the table. 'As I have taken your father's watch from you, you must take mine from me,' he said.

He laid the watch on the table and went out without saying good-bye to anyone. He walked about the roads and the byways for the rest of the day. A couple of peasants from the West Farm came to do business with him. They stood waiting outside his shop the whole afternoon, but no Tims Halvor made his appearance.

### III

ELIAS ELOF ERSSON, the husband of Karin Ingmarsdotter, was the son of a miser. His father had always treated him badly. As a child he had hardly had enough to eat, and even when he

was grown up his father had shown great harshness towards him. His father kept him at work all day long ; he was never allowed to go to the village dances, and even on Sundays he was made to work. Neither did Elias Elof become his own master when he married, for he had to live at Ingmars' Farm and be under his father-in-law ; and also at Ingmars' Farm work and frugality were the order of the day. But as long as Ingmar Ingmarsson lived Elias Elof appeared to be content ; he worked and slaved and never grumbled. People said that the Ingmarssons had got a son-in-law after their own hearts, for Elias Elof did not know that there was anything else in life but work ; he would never waste time or money on dances or cards or drinking.

But when Ingmar Ingmarsson was dead, it dawned upon Elias Elof that now he was his own master, and he determined to celebrate the event by getting drunk for once in his life. And Elias Elof got drunk, and it seemed to him as if he were in heaven. When Elias Elof thought of the years he had lived without drinking, he felt quite unhappy at all the time he had wasted. But when he then remembered that he was son-in-law at Ingmars' Farm, and rich enough to bathe in corn-brandiy, he rejoiced, and promised himself that he would soon make up for lost time.

And Elias Elof was in a hurry. Before Ingmar Ingmarsson had been in his grave a fortnight, Elias Elof had become acquainted with all the wild fellows in the whole parish. He invited them to the Ingmars' Farm, and went with them to the inns and to the village dances. Elias Elof was tipsy every day, and when his wife or others remonstrated with him, he asked them for Heaven's sake to leave him in peace, as he had wasted the whole of his life so far.

When his wife, Karin Ingmarsdotter, the first time heard him talk like this, her heart seemed to be turned to stone. She felt that her husband was like a tree, at the root of which the axe was already lying, and that she would never have any help or comfort from him. Karin Ingmarsdotter never wasted a word of remonstrance upon him, for it is a well-known fact that when a man is not worth anything, he is not worth anything.

But Karin Ingmarsdotter's sisters were not as wise as she was ; they were ashamed of Elias Elof, and that the noise and shouts from Ingmars' Farm could be heard right on to the highroad. They had words with him when he came home drunk, and although Elias Elof was very good-natured, he at last grew angry, and there was never any peace in the house.

Karin's only thought now was how she could best send her sisters out into the world so that they could escape from all the misery in which she had to live. In the course of the summer two of her sisters were married; two she sent to America, where they had well-to-do relations, and one of them, who was fond of books, she sent in the autumn to the high-school for governesses at Falun.

All these sisters had their portions paid out to them; they had each twenty thousand kroner. Karin had taken over the farm, but it was arranged that young Ingmar should buy it back again with his twenty thousand kroner as soon as he came of age, and then Karin and Elias Elof should remove somewhere else.

It was strange that Karin, who looked so awkward and diffident, had been able to send so many birds away from the nest, get them husbands and trousseaux, and tickets for America. She arranged everything entirely herself, for Elias Elof could not help her; he was completely taken up with his own happiness and bliss.

But the one who gave her the most trouble was her brother, he who was now Ingmar Ingmarsson. Young as he was, he rebelled more against Elias Elof than any of her sisters had done. It was not so much what he said, but what he did. One day he threw away all the corn-brandy and other spirits on the farm, when Elias Elof had invited the horse-dealers and card-players from three parishes to a great feast, so that they had to be content with some weak beer.

Another time, in the morning, Elias was sleeping after the night's carouse. Suddenly he felt that someone put a hand into his breast-pocket, where he kept the key of the cupboard for the corn-brandy, and took it out. Elias Elof was so confused that at first he could not pull himself sufficiently together to look up or move; but by degrees it dawned upon him that someone was going to harm his beloved corn-brandy; this was sufficient to rouse him, and he rushed upstairs to where he kept the brandy. When he got there he found Ingmar pouring water into the cask.

Karin was always trying to persuade Elias to allow Ingmar to go back to the Latin school. But Elias, who was his guardian, was strongly against it.

'Ingmar shall be a peasant, as I am, and as his father and my father were before him,' said Elias. 'What has he got to do with the Latin school? When the winter comes he shall go with me to the woods and burn charcoal—that is the best school he can go to. When I was his age I spent the whole winter in a charcoal-burner's hut.'

Karin knew Elias. As a rule she could do what she liked with her own, but if once in a while he made up his mind about something, nothing could move him. So she had to put up with Ingmar remaining at home.

Elias Elof was on the whole very good-natured, and he did his best now to win Ingmar. He always wanted the lad to go with him when he went out driving, but Ingmar always refused. He would not go with him to his drinking-bouts. Then Elias Elof swore he would not take him further than the church or the village shop. But when he had once got Ingmar safely in the carriage, he took him all over the parish, and they often did not get home until the early morning.

Karin was glad that her husband took the boy with him, for then she was less afraid of Elias being left in a ditch at the roadside, or injuring the horse by his reckless driving.

But once when Elias Elof came home at eight o'clock in the morning Ingmar sat beside him in the carriage, fast asleep.

'Come and help to carry him in,' said Elias Elof to Karin; 'the poor boy is tipsy. He can't get down by himself.'

Karin was so horrified that her knees almost gave way. She was obliged to sit down on the steps for a moment, before she was able to help Ingmar out of the carriage. When she took hold of him she saw that he was not asleep, but that he was as cold and unconscious as a dead person. Karin took him in her arms, carried him into the small room, locked the door, and tried to revive him.

Once when she had to go through the best room, she saw Elias sitting there eating his breakfast. Karin went straight up to him, and laid her hand on his shoulder. 'You had better make a good meal,' she said, 'for if you have made my brother drink himself to death, you may have to put up with poorer fare than what you get at Ingmars' Farm.'

'How you talk!' said Elias. 'As if anyone could take any harm from that beautiful corn-brandy, and he liked it so much.'

'But, all the same,' said Karin, knocking Elias on the head with her hard, bony fingers, 'if he dies, you will get your twenty years in gaol, Elias.'

When Karin went back to the boy, he had regained consciousness, but he was quite confused, and could not move a limb, and he suffered much.

'Do you think I am going to die, Karin?' he said.

'No, of course not,' she answered, and sat down beside him.

'I did not know what they were giving me,' he said.



'Thank God for that!' Karin said solemnly.

'If I die, write to my sisters,' said the boy, 'and tell them I did not know that it was spirits.'

'I will,' said Karin.

'I did not know—I swear it!'

Ingmar lay in a delirious fever the whole day.

'If you will only not tell father!' he said to Karin.

'No; no one will tell father about it,' she said.

'But if I die, father will find out, and I shall be so ashamed.'

'It was not your fault,' said his sister.

'Father will think, perhaps, that I ought to have taken better care. I ought to have been more careful about everything that Elias gave me. Do you think the whole parish will know that I have been tipsy?' he said. 'What do the servants say, and what does Strong Ingmar say?'

'They don't say anything,' Karin answered.

'You will have to tell them how it all happened. You see, they had been drinking the whole night, and I was sitting half asleep on a bench. It was at the inn at Kornsund. Then Elias came up and awoke me. He said in a very friendly voice: "Get up, Ingmar, and I will give you something to warm yourself with. Drink it; it is nothing but hot water and sugar!" I was cold when I awoke, and when I tasted the glass he gave me, I only noticed it was hot and sweet; but he must have mixed something else with it. And what will father say?'

Karin opened the door. Elias was still sitting in the next room; she thought it would do him good to hear it.

'If only father were living, Karin—if only father were living!'

'Well, what then, Ingmar?'

'Don't you think he would kill him?'

Elias burst into a loud laugh, and the boy grew so pale when he heard him that Karin quickly closed the door.

From that day Elias Elov grew more amenable, and made no objection when Karin took Ingmar down to the schoolmaster's.

After Ingmar had gone to live at the school, Mother Stina found out all about it, and she told Tims Halvor. Halvor grew quite pale and clenched his hands.

'And it was after all that she came here,' said Halvor, 'that day I would not look at her!'

'Yes, but that is always so. We only think about our own troubles.'

'But when one is fond of anyone, one ought to show more forbearance,' said Tims Halvor.

## IV

For some weeks after Tims Halvor had received the watch, his shop was always full of people. There was not a peasant in the neighbourhood who, when he drove to the village, did not make it his business to call at Halvor's shop in order to hear the story of Ingmar Ingmarsson's watch. The peasants, in their long white fur coats, stood hanging over the counter by the hour, with their solemn furrowed faces turned towards Halvor whilst he was talking to them. And at the last Halvor always had to take out the watch, and show it to the peasants, who turned it over and over again, examining its battered case.

'Oh, it was there the blow struck him,' they said, and they were glad that they had seen it with their own eyes. 'It is a grand thing for you, Halvor, to have that watch,' they said.

When Halvor showed them the watch, he never let go of it, but always kept a firm hold on the chain; but he preferred to keep it in the inside pocket of his waistcoat, and with his coat well buttoned over it.

One day Halvor was standing in his shop, talking to several peasants. He was telling the usual story, and at last he took out the watch. A kind of solemnity fell over them, and they were quite silent as the watch was passed from the one to the other. At this moment Elias Elof came into the shop, but they were so taken up with the watch that no one noticed him. He had also heard about his father-in-law's watch, and knew at once what was going on. He was not envious of Halvor, but only thought it ridiculous to see him and the others looking so solemn over a poor old silver watch.

Elias went quietly up behind those who were standing round the counter; he stretched out his arm, got hold of the watch, and snatched it from Halvor. He only did it in fun; he did not mean to take it from Tims Halvor, but only wanted to play a joke upon him.

Halvor naturally tried to get hold of the watch, but Elias went backwards, holding it high above him, as one holds a piece of sugar to a dog. Halvor laid his hand on the counter, and jumped over it. When Elias saw how angry he looked he grew quite frightened, and, instead of standing still and giving him back the watch, he rushed to the door.

Outside the door were some much-worn wooden steps. Elias's foot caught in a hole; he stumbled and did not get up. Halvor threw himself upon him, seized the watch, and gave him a kick.

'You had better not kick too hard,' said Elias. 'You had better see what is the matter with my back.'

Halvor stopped; but Elias neither moved hand nor foot to get up.

'Help me up,' he said.

'You can help yourself when you have got sober,' said Halvor.

'I am not drunk,' Elias answered. 'But when I got on to the steps I thought I saw Great Ingmar coming towards me to take his watch, and then it was I fell so badly.'

Halvor bent down to help the poor fellow up. Then he had to drive him home; he had hurt his back so seriously that he would never be able to walk again.

## V

FROM that day Elias Elof was always confined to his bed. He was lamed for life and could not move. But talk he could, and he lay all the day long begging for corn-brandy. The doctor had, however, forbidden Karin Ingmarsdotter to give him any spirits, or else he would soon be a dead man. To begin with, Elias lay in the bedroom upstairs; but there he was mostly alone, and saw no one but his wife. It was no use asking her for corn-brandy; she was not to be moved—that he knew very well. So Elias began to shout and make a great noise, so that people who were driving past came to ask what was the matter. But more especially he shrieked and shouted night after night, and disturbed everyone in the house.

When this had gone on for some weeks, Karin was obliged to have him removed downstairs into the best room. Here he was quiet for a couple of days, but then he began again to beg for corn-brandy. In the middle of the night he awoke the servants who also slept in the best room, and kept them awake for hours, begging them for God's sake to give him some of that dear, good brandy. And he told them about all the miserable years he had spent with his father, slaving and working, and of all the miserable days he spent at Ingmars' Farm, with a wife who would not give him a single drop of corn-brandy.

All the servants at Ingmars' Farm were distantly connected with the Ingmars, and had spent all their lives at the farm. Had they not had a feeling of belonging to the Ingmarssons, they would not have been able to stand it.

Karin sent for the doctor, and asked him whether she might

remove Elias to a room above the brewhouse, and which was so far away that no one could hear him. The doctor said that if they took Elias to that room he would probably become so enraged that he would have a stroke. But Karin was much too conscientious to do anything that might shorten Elias's life.

At times it was almost more than a human being could stand. Elias filled the whole house with evil and wicked words and cursing. Ingmar was never allowed to come to the house, not even at Christmas. In this misery Karin lived through a winter, and a summer and yet a winter.

There was one place to which Karin Ingmarsdotter was in the habit of going in order to be alone with her misery. There was a narrow seat behind the small hop-garden. There she often sat with her elbows on her knees, and her cheeks resting on her hands, looking at the country, and yet seeing nothing. There was really a very wide view. From where she sat the cornfields extended as far as the forest, and behind it were the hills and the Klackberg Mountain.

One day in the spring Karin was sitting there. She felt weary and hopeless, as one often does in the spring, when the snow is half melted and wet and dirty, and the earth has not yet been washed by the spring rains. The sun was shining warmly where she sat, but the north wind was blowing keenly around her; for the hops had not yet sprung up, but were lying asleep under a cover of fir branches. The mist that always accompanies a thaw was hanging thickly over the mountains; not even the tops of the birch-trees had begun to turn brown, and there was a border of snow along the edge of the forest. But the spring was coming, all the same, and Karin felt more weary than ever when she thought of it. She felt as if she could not live through another summer. She thought of all that lay before her—sowing and haymaking, spring baking and spring cleaning, weaving and sewing. It was impossible to go through it all. 'There is one person who will be glad if I die,' she thought, 'and that is Elias. Ah, I have a feeling as if I only lived to prevent him from killing himself with drink.'

Suddenly Karin looked up as if someone were calling her. Just in front of her stood Halvor Halvorsson. He stood leaning against the hedge looking at her. She did not know how long he had been there—whether he had been there all the time or only just come; but it seemed as if he had been standing there looking at her for a long time.

'I thought I should find you sitting here,' said Halvor.

'Did you?'

'Yes; I know you often used to come and sit here when you were unhappy.'

'I had nothing to be unhappy about then,' Karin said.

'The troubles you had not you imagined.'

Karin looked at Halvor, and thought what a foolish woman he must think her for not having married him. He was such a handsome, fine-looking man. 'I wonder if he has come here to see my humiliation?' she thought.

'I have been talking with Elias,' said Halvor. 'It was really him I wanted to speak to.' Karin was silent. She looked down, crossed her hands, and waited for the scorn that she thought Halvor would heap upon her. 'I told him that I was partly to blame for his misfortune, because it happened in my house.' Halvor stopped as if he expected her to give some sign either of approval or disapproval, but Karin did not move. 'Therefore I asked him,' continued Halvor, 'if he would not come to me for a time. It would always be a change for him, and he would see more people, being close to the church.' At this Karin looked up, but otherwise did not move. 'We have arranged,' said Halvor, 'that to-morrow you will have him brought down to me. I know he will come, for he thinks he can get corn-brandy in my house. But of that there is no question, Karin, you may be quite sure. He will no more be able to get it with me than with you. I shall expect him to-morrow. He shall have the small room behind the shop, and I have promised him that the door shall stand open, so that he can see all who come in.' Karin raised her hand a little. Halvor thought she was going to say no, and he continued quickly: 'You know, when Elias has made up his mind, you cannot influence him. It is also very hard for him; he is such a wreck. He can do with a little change. And he won't be so contrary with me as he has been with you. I am sure it will be different when there is a man in the house to be afraid of; and, besides, the doctor lives so near that he can come at any time.'

Karin could not get a word in, but at last she made a sign that she wanted to speak. And she did not contradict him, or make any apologies; she did not thank him, and did not ask him to let her bear her burden alone. She only looked at him as at an angel of consolation who brings life and comfort and rescue from the greatest need. And this look made her almost beautiful. At last she said: 'God bless you, Halvor, for coming to save me!'

## VI

THUS Elias went to live with Halvor, and lay in the small room behind the shop during the summer. Halvor was not, however, troubled with him long, for he died when the autumn came.

One day, shortly after his death, Gertrud asked her mother if she were not glad that Elias was dead, so that Halvor could now marry Karin.

'One ought never to be glad because people are dead,' said Mother Stina.

'Yes, but, mother, are you not glad that Halvor can get Karin?' Gertrud persisted.

'That has not come to pass yet; but I shall be glad when he does get her.'

At the time Gertrud could not at all understand what her mother meant.

Shortly afterwards she heard her mother say to Halvor: 'Now you must promise me one thing.' Halvor started and looked up. 'You must promise me to have patience about Karin.'

'Yes, of course I shall have patience,' Halvor answered, surprised.

'She is worth winning, even if one had to wait seven long years for her.'

But it was not so easy for Halvor to be patient, for he and everyone else could see that Karin would soon marry again. It was not long before people began to talk about this man and that having proposed to her, and Halvor could see from where he lived one fine carriage after another drive past on their way to Ingmars' Farm. It began a fortnight after the funeral, and went on until late in the autumn. It was not so much on a week-day, but on the Sundays there was no end to the carriages.

One Sunday afternoon Halvor was sitting outside his house smoking his pipe and looking at the people driving past. First he saw one of the inspectors from the Bergsana Works; then came the son of the innkeeper at Kormsund; and lastly Berger Sven Persson, a clever and much-respected man. He certainly was not very young; he had been married twice and was again a widower.

When Berger Sven Persson drove past, Halvor could not sit still any longer. He walked down the road, and soon found himself on the other side of the bridge, on that side of the river where Ingmars' Farm lay. 'I should like to know where all those carriages have gone,' he said. He followed the wheel-ruts, and

as he walked on he became more and more eager. 'I know it is foolish of me,' he said. He thought of Mother Stina's warning, 'I will only go as far as the entrance and see what they are about.'

Berger Sven Persson and two other men sat in the best room at Ingmars' Farm drinking coffee. Ingmar Ingmarsson, who still lived at the school-house, was at home that Sunday. He sat at the table acting the part of host, for Karin was not in the room. She had excused herself, saying she had something to do in the kitchen, as all the maids had gone down to the mission-house to hear the schoolmaster's address.

There was a dead silence in the room; they all drank their coffee without saying a word. They were all strangers to each other, and were all three waiting for an opportunity to go into the kitchen and speak with Karin alone. Then the door opened, and yet another man entered. Ingmar Ingmarsson went to meet him and conducted him to the table. 'This is Tims Halvor Halvorsson,' he said to Berger Sven Persson.

Sven Persson did not rise, but greeted him with a movement of his hand, and said in rather a sarcastic voice: 'It is interesting to meet such a well-known man.'

Ingmar Ingmarsson fetched a chair for Halvor, and made so much noise with it that there was no necessity for Halvor to make any answer.

From the moment Halvor entered the room all the wooers became very talkative. They began to praise and flatter each other; it seemed as if they would club together until Halvor was well out of the game.

'The magistrate is driving a fine horse to-day,' the inspector began.

Berger Sven Persson entered into the game, and talked about a bear the inspector had shot last winter. Then they both began to talk about the new dwelling-house which the innkeeper at Kormsund had just built, and were loud in their praises of it. At last they all three chimed in and extolled the wealth of Sven Persson. They were most eloquent, and with every word they gave Halvor to understand that he was quite too insignificant a man to have any chance against them. Halvor did feel very insignificant, and bitterly regretted that he had come.

Karin now came in to ask if anybody wanted more coffee. As soon as she saw Halvor, it struck her that it did not look very well that he should come so soon after her husband's death. When he is in such a hurry, she thought, people are sure to say that he has not looked properly after Elias, in order to get rid

of him and marry me. She would rather he had waited for two or three years; that would have been long enough to make people see that he had not treated Elias badly from impatience. 'Why is he in such a hurry?' she said to herself. 'He must know that I will not have anyone but him.'

When Karin came in, there was again silence in the room, and no one thought about anything else but how she and Halvor would greet each other. They hardly touched the tips of each other's fingers. When the magistrate saw this, he showed his delight by a prolonged whistle, whereas the inspector indulged in a loud laugh. Halvor looked at him.

'What is the inspector laughing at?' he asked quietly.

The inspector had no answer ready. He would not say anything that could wound Karin whilst she was in the room.

'He is thinking of a pointer that raises a hare, but lets someone else shoot it,' said the innkeeper's son significantly.

Karin stood and poured out the coffee. She had grown quite scarlet. She said apologetically: 'Berger Sven Persson and the rest of the company must be content with coffee alone; we no longer offer spirits to anybody at Ingmars' Farm.'

'No more do I at my house,' said the magistrate.

The inspector and the innkeeper's son were silent; they quite saw that the magistrate had scored heavily.

The magistrate at once began to hold forth about teetotalism and its beneficial effects. Karin stood listening, and agreed with him in all he said. Berger Sven Persson saw at once that this was the way to get into her favour, and enlarged upon the subject of corn-brandy and drunkenness. Karin recognised all her own thoughts on that subject, and was pleased to see them shared by such an influential and clever man.

In the midst of their conversation the magistrate looked across at Tims Halvor. He sat at the table sullen and moody; his cup stood untouched in front of him.

'It is rather hard upon him,' thought Berger Sven Persson, 'especially if it is true what people say, that he gave Elias a bit of a lift. It was in reality a good turn he did Karin by helping to rid her of that dreadful fellow, who was not good for anything.' And as he thought he had as good as won the game, he felt quite charitable towards Halvor. He raised his cup, looked towards Halvor, and said: 'Your health, Halvor! You have surely done Karin a good turn by looking after that drunken sot she had married.'

Halvor remained silent, looked him straight in the face, wonder-



ing how he should take it. But the inspector again burst into a laugh :

‘Yes, a good turn—a real good turn.’

The innkeeper’s son smiled, and repeated : ‘Yes, to be sure, a real good turn.’

Before they had finished laughing, Karin had quietly left the room through the kitchen door. She remained standing outside the door, but near enough to hear everything that was said in the best room. She was only angry with Halvor because he had come too soon. It would end by her never being able to marry him. The gossips were already busy. ‘I don’t know how I shall be able to bear losing him a second time,’ she thought, pressing her hand against her heart.

At first everything was quite quiet in the best room ; then she heard a chair pushed back and someone getting up.

‘Are you already going, Halvor ?’ asked young Ingmar.

‘Yes,’ answered Halvor ; ‘I cannot stay any longer. Will you say good-bye for me to Karin Ingmarsdotter ?’

‘Why don’t you go into the kitchen and say it for yourself ?’

‘No,’ she heard Halvor say, ‘we two have finished with each other.’

Karin’s heart began to beat, and thoughts rushed through her head as never before. Now Halvor was angry with her, and one could not wonder at it. She had hardly dared to give him her hand, and when the others had scoffed at him she had not defended him, but silently sneaked away.

Now he would think she did not love him ; now he would go away and never come back. She could not understand how she could have treated him so after all he had done for her.

Suddenly it seemed to her that she heard her father’s words—that the Ingmarssons need not trouble themselves about what people said, as long as they only walked in the ways of God.

Karin quickly opened the door, and stood before Halvor before he had had time to leave the room.

‘Are you going already, Halvor ? I thought you would have stayed and taken supper with us.’

Halvor stood and stared at her. She seemed as if she were transformed as she stood there, flushing and eager, and there was something tender and touching about her that he had never seen before.

‘I mean to go, and never come back again,’ said Halvor. He could not understand what she meant.

‘Sit down and drink your coffee, Halvor,’ said Karin.

She took his hand and led him to the table. She went both red and white. Her courage nearly failed her, but she did not give in, although she knew nothing more bitter than sneers and contempt. 'He shall, at any rate, see that I am willing to share his burden,' she thought. 'Berger Sven Persson and all of you,' said Karin, 'Halvor and I have not yet spoken about this matter, as I have so recently become a widow; but now I think it best that you should all understand that I would rather marry Halvor than anyone else.' She stopped, for her voice trembled. 'People may say what they like about this, but Halvor and I have not done anything wrong.'

When she had finished, Karin drew nearer to Halvor, as if to find shelter from all the hard words she would now have to hear.

All were silent for awhile, but it was mostly from astonishment over Karin Ingmarsdotter, who looked more like a young girl than she had ever done before in her life.

Halvor said, with a trembling voice: 'When I received your father's watch, I thought that was the greatest thing which could happen to me; but what you have now done I think is the greatest that can happen to any man.'

Then Berger Sven Persson stood up—he was in many ways an excellent man. 'Then, we must all of us congratulate Karin and Halvor,' he said in a friendly voice, 'for everybody knows that he whom Karin Ingmarsdotter chooses is without blame or blemish.'

## CHAPTER IV

### AT ZION

No one can be surprised at an old village schoolmaster sometimes becoming a little too self-confident. The whole of his long life he has been giving out wisdom and knowledge to his fellow-men. He sees that all the peasants are living upon what he has taught them, and that not one of them knows any more than what he, the schoolmaster, has taught them. Can he help, therefore, feeling inclined to look upon all the villagers as school-children, however old they may have grown, and that he considers himself wiser than everybody else? It is simply difficult for an old schoolmaster like that to treat anyone as grown up, for in his eyes they always remain his old school-children.

One Sunday, in the winter, directly after the service, the Pastor and the schoolmaster stood talking together in the small arched chancel; the conversation had turned upon the Salvation Army.

'It is indeed the most extraordinary idea,' said the Pastor; 'I never did think that I should live to see anything like it.'

The schoolmaster looked severely at the Pastor; he thought it was unbecoming of him to speak like that. The Pastor could surely never think that such tomfoolery as that would find its way into their parish. 'I don't think the Pastor will live to see it, either,' he said with emphasis.

The Pastor, who knew himself to be a weak and broken man, allowed the schoolmaster, as a rule, to have his own way, but he could not help contradicting him. 'How can you feel so sure that we shall escape the Salvation Army, Storm?' he said.

'Yes,' answered Storm, 'when Pastor and schoolmaster stand together, there is no fear of any such disreputable disorder coming amongst us.'

'I am not so sure that you stand by me, Storm,' said the Pastor a little pointedly. 'You preach your own way in your Zion.'

The schoolmaster did not answer at once ; then he said very quietly : 'The Pastor has never heard how I preach.'

This mission-house was a constant stumbling-block. The Pastor had never been able to reconcile himself to it, and he had never set his foot in the place. But now that the matter had come under discussion, the two old friends were very much afraid lest they should have wounded each other. 'I am, perhaps, unjust to Storm,' thought the Pastor ; 'during the four years that he has held a meeting on Sunday afternoons in the mission-house, there have been more people at church in the morning than ever before, and I have not seen the slightest sign of division in the parish. He is a faithful friend and servant, and I will try and show him how much I value him.'

The schoolmaster was very attentive in helping the Pastor on with his fur coat, and walked by his side the whole way to the steps of the Parsonage, for fear he should fall on the slippery road, and when Storm went back the Pastor stood on the steps and shouted good-bye and many thanks for his help until he was out of sight.

But their little disagreement in the morning was the cause of the Pastor going to Storm's meeting in the afternoon. 'I will give Storm a great pleasure,' he thought ; 'I will go and hear him preach in his Zion.'

On his way there the Pastor's thoughts went back to the time when the mission-house was being built. How full the air had been of expectation, and how sure he himself had been that God intended something great ! But nothing had happened. 'Our Lord must have changed His mind,' he thought ; and he almost laughed within himself to think that he could think in this way about our Lord.

The mission-house was a large room with light-coloured walls. On each side of the room hung pictures of Luther and Melancthon in fur-trimmed robes. Under the beading of the ceiling were painted Scripture texts, embellished with flowers and heavenly bassoons and trumpets, and above a little platform at one end of the room hung an oleograph representing 'The Good Shepherd.'

The great bare room was full of people, and nothing more was needed to give it an impressive and solemn appearance. Most of the people wore the picturesque yellow dress of the parish, and the women's white starched and wide outstanding headgear made it look as if the room was filled with large birds with white wings.

Storm had already commenced his address, when he saw the

Pastor come in and sit down in the front-row. 'You are a wonderful man, Storm!' he thought to himself. 'Everything succeeds with you. Here is the Pastor himself come to listen to you.'

During the time the schoolmaster had preached in the mission-house he had gone through the whole Bible from beginning to end. And to-day he was expounding the Revelation of St. John, and was just speaking about the heavenly Jerusalem and everlasting bliss. He was so pleased at the Pastor having come, that he thought to himself: 'I for my part could never wish for anything better in heaven than to be always standing on a platform, teaching good and obedient children; and if our Lord now and again came in and listened to me, as the Pastor has done to-day, no one in heaven could be happier than I.'

The Pastor's attention was quickened when he heard him speaking about Jerusalem, and the strange old thoughts again crossed his mind. In the middle of the address the door opened and a number of persons came in. There were about twenty, and they remained standing at the entrance, in order not to cause any disturbance. 'Ay, ay,' thought the Pastor, 'I knew something was going to happen.'

No sooner had Storm finished his address than a voice coming from the group standing at the door was heard to say: 'I should like to be allowed to say a few words.'

The voice was exceedingly soft and gentle. 'It must be Hök Matts Ericksson,' thought the Pastor, and others with him. No one in the whole parish had such a soft, childlike voice.

The next moment a little man with a good face made his way up to the platform, followed by a number of men and women, who had apparently accompanied him to support and encourage him. The Pastor, the schoolmaster, and the whole assemblage sat motionless. 'Hök Matts has come to tell us about some great calamity,' they thought. 'Either the King is dead, or war has broken out, or some poor creature has fallen into the river and been drowned.'

But Hök Matts did not look as if he had any sad news to announce. He was grave, and apparently much moved, but at the same time looked so happy that there was almost a smile over his face. 'I should like to tell the schoolmaster and the whole parish,' he said, 'that the last Sunday but one, when I was sitting in my room with my family and all my folks, the Spirit came upon me and I began to preach. The slippery roads had prevented us from coming up here to hear Storm, and we sat

longing to hear the Word of God. All at once it came over me that I could speak. I have preached these last two Sundays, and now my neighbours and my own people have told me that I ought to come up to the mission-house and address the whole parish.'

Hök Matts further said that he was surprised that the gift of speech should have fallen upon such an humble man as he was. 'But the schoolmaster himself is also a peasant,' he continued with more confidence.

After this introduction Hök Matts folded his hands, and would at once have begun to address them, but the schoolmaster had now pulled himself sufficiently together after the first surprise.

'Do you mean to say, Hök Matts, that it is your intention to speak here to-night?' he said, interrupting him.

'Yes, that was my intention,' said the man. He became as frightened as a child when he saw Storm's angry face. 'Yes, it was my intention first to ask permission from the schoolmaster and the meeting,' he said humbly.

'We have finished for to-night,' said Storm decisively.

The good little man began to beg with tears in his voice.

'Could I not be allowed to say a few words? It has all come to me whilst I have been walking behind the plough, or been attending to the charcoal-burning, and now I feel as if I must say it.'

But the schoolmaster, for whom the day had brought such unusual honour, would show no mercy. 'Matts Eriksson comes here with his own ideas, and says that it is the Word of God,' he said in a correcting voice.

Hök Matts did not venture to oppose him, and the schoolmaster opened the hymn-book. 'We will now sing No. 187,' he said. He first read out the hymn in a loud voice, and then began to sing: 'Behold the New Jerusalem.' In the meantime he thought to himself: 'It was just as well that the Pastor happened to come to-day; he can see that I know how to keep order in my Zion.'

But no sooner was the hymn finished than one of the members stood up. It was Ljung Björn Olofsson, a proud and stately man, married to one of the Ingmarsdotters and owner of a large farm in the middle of the village.

'We at this end of the room,' said Ljung Björn very quietly, 'think that the schoolmaster should have asked our opinion before he refused to give Hök Matts permission to speak.'

'Do you think so, my lad?' said the schoolmaster in the same voice he would have used to an impertinent little boy. 'Then, I

can tell you that no one except myself has anything to say here in this room.'

Ljung Björn flushed scarlet. He had most assuredly not wanted to raise a quarrel with Storm—he had only wanted to soften the blow for Hök Matts, who was such a decent man—but he could not help feeling angry at the schoolmaster's reply. Before he had time to answer, one of those who had come with Hök Matts began to speak: 'I have heard Hök Matts speak twice, and I must say it is wonderful to hear him. I believe that everyone here present would be the better for hearing him.'

The schoolmaster at once answered kindly, but in the same reproving tone he would have used when correcting a boy in school: 'You can see for yourself, Krister Larsson, that I cannot allow this. If Hök Matts were allowed to preach to-day, you, Krister, would want to preach next Sunday, and Ljung Björn the Sunday after.'

When the schoolmaster said this several laughed; but Ljung Björn answered sharply: 'I don't see any reason why Krister and I should not be as well fitted to preach as the schoolmaster!'

Tims Halvor rose to quieten the meeting and prevent strife: 'I think those who have given the money for the building of this mission-house ought to be consulted before any new preacher is allowed to speak.'

But now Krister Larsson had become angry, and no longer spoke simply to defend Hök Matts: 'I remember that when we built this house we were all agreed that this should be a free meeting-house, and not a church where only one single man is allowed to explain the Word of God.'

When Krister said this it seemed as if the whole meeting drew a deep breath. Only an hour before it had never occurred to any of them that they could ever wish to hear anyone else than the schoolmaster; but now they thought: 'It would be interesting to hear something new; we should not mind hearing something fresh and seeing another face behind the desk on the platform.'

Everything, however, would probably have ended quietly had it not been for Kulas Gunnar. He was also a brother-in-law of Tims Halvor. He was a tall, swarthy fellow with keen eyes. He, like the others, was fond of the schoolmaster, but he was also very fond of a dispute. 'There was a great deal of talk about freedom when we built this house,' he said; 'but I, for one, have not heard a single word of freedom since it was built.'

The schoolmaster grew very red. These were the first words that showed any signs of revolt and hostility. 'This much I can

tell you, Kulas Gunnar,' he said, 'that here you hear the words of real freedom, such as Luther preached; but there has never been freedom here to proclaim any of those new-fangled ideas which spring up to-day and to-morrow fall to the ground.'

'The schoolmaster would have us believe that everything new is bad as soon as it has anything to do with the teaching,' Gunnar continued more quietly, as if he regretted his hastiness. 'He is willing to let us use new methods when it is a question of raising stock, and he is also willing to get us new agricultural machines; but we are not allowed to hear anything of the new implements with which God's acres are now tilled.'

The schoolmaster began to think that Kulas Gunnar's words were worse than he had intended them to be. 'Does Gunnar mean,' he said, trying to adopt a less serious tone, 'that another doctrine than that of Luther's shall be preached here?'

'It is not a question of a new doctrine,' said Gunnar sharply, 'but only as to who shall preach; and, as far as I know, Matts Eriksson is quite as good a Lutheran as both the schoolmaster and the Pastor.'

The schoolmaster had for the moment forgotten the Pastor. Now he looked at him. The Pastor sat quiet and immovable, with his chin resting on the knob of his stick. There was a strange brightness in his eyes, and Storm saw that they were fixed upon him.

'It would perhaps have been just as well if he had not come to-night,' thought the schoolmaster.

It occurred to Storm that what was now happening resembled something he had experienced before in his life. It had happened now and again on a bright, sunny spring morning that a little bird had perched itself outside the school-room window singing lustily. All at once the whole school began to beg for a holiday. They gave over reading, became restless and noisy, and he could hardly manage them. It was something like this that had happened to the meeting this evening after Hök Matts' arrival. But the schoolmaster meant to show the Pastor and all of them that he was capable of quelling the revolt. 'To begin with, I will leave them alone, and let the ringleaders talk themselves hoarse,' he thought, and went and sat down on a chair, standing behind the table with the water-bottle.

But at that moment a perfect storm of voices rose against him, for the same thought seemed to strike them all: 'We are all of us just as good as the schoolmaster. Why shall he alone be allowed to tell us what we shall and what we shall not believe?'



These were new thoughts to most of them, but their words showed them that these thoughts had really been in their minds ever since the schoolmaster had built the mission-house and shown them that a plain and unpretentious man could expound the Word of God.

After a while the schoolmaster thought: 'The children must have quietened down by this. Now it is time to show them who is the master here!'

He stood up, rapped the table sharply, and said in a loud voice: 'There must now be an end of this. What is the meaning of all this noise? I am going now, and you must also go, that I may close the room.'

Some of them actually did get up. They had gone to his school, and knew that when he rapped the table it was a sign that everybody had to obey. But most of them remained quietly sitting.

'The schoolmaster forgets that now we are grown-up men,' they said. 'He thinks that we must obey him as soon as he raps on the desk.'

They went on talking about their wanting to hear some new preachers, and discussed whom they should send for. They were already disputing as to whether it should be the Waldenströmsians or the lay-preachers from the Evangelical National Union.

The schoolmaster stood looking at them as if he saw something new and uncanny. For up till now he had always seemed to see the child in each individual face. But now the memory of all those trusting, childlike faces vanished, and he only saw a number of grown-up people with grave and rugged faces, and he felt that over these he had no power. He hardly knew even how he should address them.

The noise continued. It grew louder and louder. The schoolmaster remained silent. Kulas Gunnar and Ljung Björn and Krister Larsson led the attack. Hök Matts, who had been the original cause of the whole disturbance, rose over and over again, begging them to be silent, but no one listened to him.

The schoolmaster again looked down at the Pastor. He was sitting just as motionless as before and looking at him with the same expression in his eyes. 'He is thinking of that evening four years ago, when I told him that I was going to build the mission-house,' thought the schoolmaster.

'He was right,' Storm went on thinking; 'it has all come upon us—false teachers and revolt and divisions—and it would perhaps never have come had I not been so eager about building my Zion.'

The same moment that this became clear to the schoolmaster he raised his head and straightened himself. He took from his pocket a small bright key; it was the key of the mission-house. He held it towards the light, so that it could be seen all over the room.

‘I now place this key upon the table,’ he said. ‘I shall never take it again, for I see that it has opened the door for everything that I with its help had hoped to shut out.’

With these words the schoolmaster laid the key upon the table, took his hat, and walked straight down to the Pastor. ‘I must thank your reverence because you have come and heard me this evening,’ he said; ‘if you had not come to-night, you never would have heard me.’

## CHAPTER V

### 'DIE WILDE JAGD'

PEOPLE could not forget how shamefully Elias Elof Ersson had dealt with Karin Ingmarsdotter and with young Ingmar Ingmarsson.

The farm, which really belonged to Karin, he had mortgaged so heavily that she would have been compelled to make it over to the creditors had not Halvor Halvorsson been rich enough to buy the farm and pay off the debts. Ingmar Ingmarsson's twenty thousand kroner, which Elias had had under his control, had entirely disappeared.

Some people thought Elias had hidden them in the ground ; others maintained that he had given them away ; but in any case they were not to be found anywhere.

When Ingmar found out how poor he was, he spoke to his sister about what she thought he should do. Ingmar told Karin that he would like to be a schoolmaster. He asked her to arrange for him to go on living at the Storms' until he was old enough to enter the high school. In the village, he said, he would be able to borrow books both from the schoolmaster and the Pastor, and he could, besides, help Storm in the school with the children, and that would be good practice for him.

Karin thought over it for a long time ; at last she said : ' I can quite understand you don't care to remain at the farm when you can't become the master.'

When Gertrud, the schoolmaster's daughter, heard that Ingmar was coming back to live with them, she pulled a long face. She thought that, if they must have a boy in the house, they might as well have had the bailiff's good-looking son Bertel, or Hök Matts' son Gabriel, who was always so amusing.

Gertrud liked both Gabriel and Bertel very much, but she was never quite sure whether she liked Ingmar or not. She liked him because he was so patient and good in helping her with her lessons, and always did as she told him ; but, on the other hand,

she did not like him because he was so awkward, and slow and plain, and did not understand how to play. Sometimes she admired him because he was diligent and quick at his lessons; at other times she despised him because he never defended himself when he was bullied.

Gertrud's brain was always full of strange dreams and fancies, which she generally confided to Ingmar, and when he now and then went away for a few days she became restless, and felt as if she had no one to talk to.

Gertrud had never given it a thought that Ingmar was rich and belonged to the oldest family in the parish, but had always treated him as if he were her inferior; but when she heard that he had become poor she began to cry, and when he told her that he did not intend to try and get the farm back again, but meant to be a teacher, she became excessively angry.

Heaven only knows what she in her dreams had expected him to attain to!

The two children at the schoolmaster's had been brought up very strictly. They were kept to their lessons, and very rarely had any amusement. A change took place, however, in this respect, for in the spring Storm gave up preaching in the mission-house. Sometimes Mother Stina would say to her husband: 'We must remember, Storm, that the children are young; when you and I were seventeen we danced many a night from sunset to sunrise.'

One Saturday evening, when Hök Gabriel Mattsson and Gunhild, the daughter of the chairman of the Parish Council, came to see them, they actually danced at the schoolhouse.

Gertrud was wild with delight that they were allowed to dance, but Ingmar would not join them. He got a book and went and sat down on the sofa in the window, and began to read. Gertrud tried over and over again to persuade him to dance, but Ingmar was sulky and shy and would not. Mother Stina looked at him and sighed. 'One can see he belongs to an old family,' she thought; 'they say that those kind of people can never be really young.'

The three who did dance enjoyed themselves so much that they wanted to go and dance next Saturday evening. At last they spoke to the schoolmaster's wife about it.

'If you will go and dance at Strong Ingmar's I have no objection,' said Mother Stina. 'There I know you will only meet decent people.'

Storm made another condition: 'I will not allow Gertrud to go and dance unless Ingmar goes with her and looks after her.'

They all three rushed up to Ingmar. He said ‘No’ decidedly, kept his eyes on his book, and went on reading.

‘It is of no use asking him,’ said Gertrud in such a peculiar tone that he looked up. It was surprising how pretty Gertrud looked after dancing. There was a scornful look on her face, and her eyes flashed as she turned away. It was very evident how much she despised him for being so plain and sulky, and because he did not know how to enjoy himself. Ingmar was obliged to change his mind and say ‘Yes’—there was no help for it.

Two or three evenings after this Gertrud and her mother were sitting in the kitchen spinning.

Suddenly Gertrud noticed that her mother became uneasy.

She stopped her spinning-wheel, and listened between every word she said. ‘I cannot imagine what it can be,’ she said.

‘Can you not hear anything, Gertrud?’

‘Yes,’ answered Gertrud; ‘there is someone in the school-room.’

‘Who can it be at this time of the day? And listen how it rustles and shakes, and rushes from the one end of the room to the other!’

Yes, something did rustle and shake and rush about in the big empty school-room; both Gertrud and her mother became frightened and nervous. ‘There must really be someone in the school-room,’ said Gertrud.

‘There cannot be anyone,’ answered Mother Stina. ‘I have heard the same noise every evening since the night you danced.’

Gertrud could see that her mother thought the room had been haunted since they had danced there. She knew that if her mother got that idea into her head there would be an end to dancing or any other amusement.

‘I am going up to see what it is,’ said Gertrud; but Mother Stina seized hold of her dress.

‘I don’t know whether I dare let you go.’

‘Oh yes, mother, it is best to find out what it is.’

‘Perhaps you are right; but I had better go with you.’

They crept softly up the stairs. They dared not open the door, but Mother Stina bent down and peeped through the keyhole. She stood looking for some time. Gertrud fancied she heard her mother laughing.

‘What is it, mother?’ Gertrud whispered.

‘You can look for yourself; only keep quiet.’

Gertrud stooped and peeped through the keyhole. Tables and chairs, that always filled the middle of the room, had been pushed to one side, there was a cloud of dust, and in the midst

of the dust Ingmar Ingmarsson was rushing about, dancing with a chair.

'Has Ingmar gone out of his mind?' exclaimed Gertrud.

'Hush,' said her mother, drawing her away from the door and going down the stairs. 'I think he is trying to teach himself to dance. I suppose he wants to learn, so that he can go with you on Saturday,' she continued, with a smile.

Mother Stina shook with laughter. 'He nearly frightened me out of my senses,' she said. 'But, thank God! he, too, can be young.' When she had finished laughing she continued: 'You are not to say a word to anyone about this, Gertrud!'

Saturday evening came; the four young people stood on the steps of the school-house, and were just going to set off. Mother Stina inspected them and thought they looked very smart. The young fellows had on yellow skin breeches, green wadmal waist-coats with red sleeves. Gertrud and Gunhild had large white puffed sleeves, large pink kerchiefs covered nearly the whole of their bodices, their skirts were striped and had a border of red cloth, and their large aprons were as bright a pink as their kerchiefs.

It was a beautiful spring evening. The first part of the way the young people walked along in silence. Gertrud cast stolen glances at Ingmar, and thought of how hard he had worked to learn to dance. Whatever the reason was—whether it was the thought of Ingmar or because she was going to a dance—she began to lose herself in fantastic dreams; and she let the others go on a little in advance so as not to be disturbed. She made up quite a little story about how it came to pass that the trees got new leaves.

It happened in this way, she thought: the trees, which had been sleeping the whole winter undisturbed, suddenly began to dream. They had dreamt that the summer had already come; they saw that the fields were dressed in green grass and waving corn, the rose-trees were radiant with newly-opened roses, and the streams and ponds were covered with the leaves of the water-lily. The stones were hidden by the fine creeping branches of the Linnæa, and the ground in the forest was covered with anemones and star-flowers. In the midst of everything that was so beautifully garbed and decked, the trees saw themselves standing bare and naked, and they began to feel ashamed of their nakedness, as one does in dreams.

In their confusion, it seemed to the trees as if everything were making fun of them. The bumble-bees came buzzing and mocked them; the magpies laughed and chuckled, and the other

birds seemed to abuse them. ‘Where shall we find something with which to cover ourselves?’ thought the trees in despair; but they could not discover the smallest leaf on either twig or branch, and their despair was so great that they awoke.

When they sleepily looked about, their first thought was: ‘Thank Heaven, it was only a dream; there is not a sign of summer. It is a mercy we have not overslept ourselves!’

But when they had looked round a little more carefully, they noticed that the ice had disappeared from the lakes; blades of grass and anemones were beginning to peep out of the ground; and the sap stirred and fermented behind their bark. ‘The spring is here, even if the summer has not come,’ said the trees; ‘it is a good thing we awoke. Now we have slept long enough for this year; now we must cast off our shells and put on our clothes.’

And so the birch-trees hurriedly put out some small sticky leaves, whilst the maples in the meantime only garbed themselves in green flowers. The leaves of the alder crept out in such a wrinkled and unfinished state that they almost looked as if they were deformed; whilst, on the other hand, the leaves of the willow sprang from their buds smooth and shapely.

A smile came over Gertrud’s face when she thought of all this, and she only wished that she had been alone with Ingmar, so that she could have told him about it.

They had a long way to walk, right up to Ingmars’ Farm; it was more than an hour’s walk. They went by the side of the river, and Gertrud walked the whole time a little behind the others, so as to be able to dream in peace. Now her thoughts were busy with the red glare of the sunset, which flamed first over the river, then over the country. The gray alders and the light green birches were wrapped in its fiery glare; they stood flaming for a moment, and then again resumed their natural colour.

Suddenly Ingmar stood still; he stopped short in the middle of what he was telling them, and could not say a word.

‘What is the matter?’ asked Gunhild.

Ingmar looked quite pale, and stood staring at something in front of him. The others only saw a wide plain, checked by cornfields and surrounded by mountain slopes. In the midst of the plain lay a large farmstead. At that moment the lustre of the setting sun rested upon the farm, all the window-panes glittered, and the old roofs and walls shone a bright red.

Gertrud came up quickly and gave a hasty glance at Ingmar, and then drew the others away with her.

'Don't ask him what is the matter with him,' she whispered. 'It is because he can't bear to see the Ingmars' Farm. He has not been home for two years—not since he became poor.'

The way they were going led right across the plain, past the farm, down to Strong Ingmar's hut at the borders of the forest.

Ingmar soon came after, and shouted to them: 'Shall we not go this way?' He led them to a pathway winding along the outskirts of the forest, and a considerable distance from the farm.

'I suppose you know Strong Ingmar?' said Hök Matts' Gabriel to Ingmar.

'Yes, we have been good friends ever since I was a little boy.'

'Do you know if it is true that he understands witchcraft?' Gunhild now asked.

'Well—no,' Ingmar said, but hesitated a little, as if he half believed it, all the same.

'You might as well tell us what you know about it,' continued Gunhild.

★ 'The schoolmaster says we must not believe in such things.' ✓

'The schoolmaster can surely not forbid us to see what we see, or believe what we know.'

Ingmar felt greatly inclined to tell them; all the memories from his childhood came crowding upon him. 'I can tell you something I have seen myself,' he said.

'It was one winter when father and Strong Ingmar were working at the charcoal-kiln high up in the forest. When Christmas came, Strong Ingmar offered to look after the kiln by himself, so that father could come home during the holy-days. It was arranged in this way, and on Christmas Eve mother sent me to the forest with Christmas fare for Strong Ingmar. I started early, and at noon reached the place where they were burning charcoal. Father and Strong Ingmar had just finished a kilnful when I came; they had spread it about, and all the hot charcoal was lying on the ground to cool. Smoke came from the heaps, and where the charcoal was lying thickly it was on the point of breaking into flames; but that it must not do. That was the most difficult moment of the whole business. Father also said, as soon as he saw me: "I am afraid you will have to go back alone, Little Ingmar. I can't leave Strong Ingmar to do this alone." Strong Ingmar stood on the other side of the heap, in the worst smoke. "You can go home quite comfortably, Great Ingmar. I have managed worse things than this before."

'Shortly afterwards the smoke grew less. "Let us see what Christmas fare Brita thinks I have deserved," said Strong Ingmar,



taking the basket from me. "Come with me, and I will show you how grandly your father and I live here." He then took me to a little hut he and father had built. The back of the hut was a big stone, but otherwise the walls were made of branches of fir and blackthorn. "You did not think, my lad, that your father had such a royal palace far away in the forest. Here are walls which can keep out both rain and cold," said Strong Ingmar, thrusting his arm through the fir branches.

'Father came up now and joined in the laugh. They were both black with soot, and their clothes smelt from the sour charcoal smoke, but I had never seen father in such good spirits. Neither of them could stand upright in the hut, and there was nothing in the hut but a couch of fir branches and two big stones on which they had made a fire, but they were happy and content. They sat down on the fir branches and opened the basket. "I don't know whether you can have any," said Strong Ingmar to father, "for it is *my* Christmas fare." "You will have to take pity upon me—remember it is Christmas Eve," said father. "Well, I suppose it would be a shame to let a poor charcoal-burner starve," said Strong Ingmar.

'In this way they went on. There was also a little corn-brandy, and I wondered at people being so glad for their food and drink. "You can tell your mother," said Strong Ingmar, "that your father has eaten all the food you brought. She will have to send some more to-morrow." "So I see," I said.

'In the same moment I was startled by a crackling noise in the fire. It sounded almost as if someone had thrown a handful of gravel on the flat stones where the fire was burning. Father did not notice it, but Strong Ingmar said at once: "Is that what's up?" but continued eating. Then it crackled again still louder. I could not see anything, but this time it sounded as if a whole handful of cobbles had been thrown on the fire. "Dear me! is there such a hurry?" said Strong Ingmar, and went out. "The charcoal is on fire!" he shouted presently; "but you stop where you are, Great Ingmar—I can look after it by myself." Father and I sat quite still; neither of us felt inclined to talk.

'Then Strong Ingmar came in again and the fun began afresh. "I don't think I have had such a merry Christmas for years," he said. Just as he said this the noise began afresh. "Dear me! there is something wrong again," he said. He went out, and found that the charcoal had again taken fire. When he came back father said: "I see now that you have such good help that you can manage without me." "You can be quite easy about

going home to keep your Christmas, Great Ingmar; I have someone who will be sure to help me." Then father and I went home, and things went all right, and never, neither before nor after, has any charcoal caught fire for Strong Ingmar.'

Gunhild thanked Ingmar for his story, but Gertrud went quietly along as if she were half frightened. Darkness had begun to fall; everything that had before been red was now blue and gray. In the forest one could see a single bright leaf, which shone with a red glare like the eye of a troll.

Gertrud was quite astonished at Ingmar having told them such a long story. She looked at him, and could almost fancy that he had grown straighter and walked with a firmer step. 'He seems almost to have become another person since he trod upon the ground of his forefathers,' she thought. Gertrud could not understand why she felt so disturbed in her mind by this; she did not like it. But she thought better of it, and began to tease Ingmar, and asked him if he were going to dance.

At last they reached Strong Ingmar's house. It was a small, poor-looking place; they could see the lighted candles through the small windows, and hear someone playing the violin and the noise of people dancing. The young girls hesitated, and asked: 'Is it really here? Can one dance here?'

They did not see how there could possibly be any room to dance.

'It is all right,' said Gabriel; 'go in. The house is bigger than it looks.'

The door was open, and the young people, who were warm with dancing, stood outside. The young girls had taken off their headkerchiefs, and were using them as fans. The young fellows took off their short black jackets, in order to dance in their light-green waistcoats with red sleeves.

The new-comers made their way through the group at the door into the room. The first person they saw was Strong Ingmar; he was a little, thick-set man with a large head and big beard. 'He does look as if he might have something to do with the brownies,' thought Gertrud. He stood on the fireplace playing his fiddle, so as not to be in the way of the dancers.

The room was larger than it seemed from the outside, but it was poor and dilapidated. The bare beams were worm-eaten, and the roof was black from smoke. There were neither curtains before the windows nor any cloth on the table. One could easily see that Strong Ingmar lived by himself. His children had left him to go to America, and the old man's only pleasure in his

loneliness was to gather the young people of the parish around him on a Saturday evening and play to them on his violin.

It was very close and half dark in the hut. Couple after couple whirled round in the dance. Gertrud could hardly breathe, and wanted to get out into the fresh air; but it was quite impossible to pass through the crowd blocking the door.

Strong Ingmar played well and in excellent time; but when Ingmarsson entered the room he drew his bow across the strings with a great crash, so that all the dancers stopped. ‘It was not anything,’ he said; ‘you go on dancing.’

Ingmar placed his arm round Gertrud’s waist to dance. Gertrud was, of course, much surprised that he would dance; but they had to remain standing, for the one couple followed so closely upon the other that it was not possible to get in when one had not been in the dance from the beginning.

Old Strong Ingmar again stopped playing, rapped with his bow on the edge of the fireplace, and shouted in an authoritative voice: ‘There shall be room for Great Ingmar’s son when there is dancing in my house!’ They all looked at Ingmar; he felt shy, and did not move a step. Gertrud was obliged to give him a push to make him begin.

As soon as the dance was over, the owner of the hut came up to greet him. When he felt Ingmar’s hand in his, the old man pretended to be frightened, and at once let go of it. ‘One must be careful of these fine schoolmaster hands,’ he said. ‘A clumsy old man like me might easily shake them to pieces.’

He took Ingmar and those with him up to the table, and pushed aside some old peasant women who were looking at the dancing. He then went to the cupboard and took out bread and butter and weak beer.

‘I never offer them any refreshments,’ he said. ‘The others must be content with music and dancing, but Ingmar Ingmarsson must have a bite under my roof.’

Whilst they were eating, he drew out a three-legged stool, sat down right in front of Ingmar, and gazed at him. ‘It is you, is it, who wants to be a schoolmaster?’ he said.

Ingmar sat looking down; the corners of his mouth were drawn as if he were inclined to laugh, but he answered, all the same, rather sadly: ‘They have no use for me at home.’

‘Have they no use for you?’ asked the old man. ‘You do not know when the farm may want you. Elias lived two years; who knows how long Halvor may live?’

‘Halvor is a strong and hearty man,’ said Ingmar.

'You know as well as I do that Halvor will give up the farm to you as soon as you are able to buy it.'

'I should not think he would be foolish enough to leave Ingmars' Farm when he has once become master of it.'

During this conversation Ingmar sat clenching the table with his hand. It was a plain deal table. Suddenly there was a noise—Ingmar had broken a piece off the corner.

Strong Ingmar sat with his hand raised, talking: 'Of course he will never give up the farm to you if you become a schoolmaster.'

'You think not?'

'Think—think!' said the old man; 'it is easy enough to see where you have been brought up. Have you ever driven a plough?'

'No,' Ingmar answered.

'Have you ever had charge of a charcoal-kiln or felled a big fir?'

Ingmar sat there looking very meek, but the table creaked under his fingers. At last the old man became attentive and stopped suddenly. 'I say,' he said, looking at the damaged table, 'I can see I shall have to look a little after you again.' He took one of the pieces Ingmar had broken off and tried to fit it into its place. 'Well I never! Why don't you go to the fair and exhibit yourself, you rogue?' he continued, patting Ingmar on the shoulder. 'You would make a nice schoolmaster!'

In a moment he was up again on the fireplace, playing. He played quite differently now. He beat time with his foot, and made the dancing go with a rush. 'This is young Ingmar's polka,' he shouted. 'Hoop-la! Now the whole room is dancing for young Ingmar.'

Gertrud and Gunhild were both pretty girls, and were always dancing. Ingmar did not dance much. He stood talking most of the time with some older men at the back of the room. Between the dances a small crowd gathered round Ingmar, as if it were a pleasure to them simply to see him here. Gertrud thought Ingmar had quite forgotten her, and she felt very dull. 'He feels that he is Great Ingmar's son now, and that I am only the schoolmaster's Gertrud,' she thought.

She was astonished to find that she cared so much about it.

Between the dances the young people went outside. The spring night was bitterly cold, and it was easy enough to get cooled. It was quite dark, and none of them wanted to go home. 'We must stay a little longer,' they said; 'the moon will soon be out, and until it is we can't see to find our way home.'

Once Ingmar went out to Gertrud, who stood outside the door, but Strong Ingmar came almost directly and took Ingmar away with him. 'Come, I want to show you something,' he said. He took Ingmar by the hand and led him through the thicket at the back of the house. 'Stand still and look down,' he said.

Ingmar looked down a cleft, at the bottom of which something white glittered. 'Why, this is Langfossen Waterfall,' he said.

'Of course it is Langfossen,' said Strong Ingmar; 'but what do you suppose a waterfall like that can be used for?'

'One could use it to work a saw-mill or a flour-mill,' said Ingmar.

The old man began to laugh; he patted Ingmar on the shoulder, and gave him a dig in the side that nearly sent him down into the river. 'But who is to build the saw-mill, who is to become rich, who is to buy back Ingmars' Farm?'

'I was just thinking of that,' said Ingmar.

Then Strong Ingmar began to tell him about a great scheme he had in his mind. Ingmar should get Tims Halvor to build a saw-mill at the waterfall, and then rent it from him. The old man for a long time had thought of nothing else but how he could find a way for Great Ingmar's son to become rich again.

Ingmar stood still, looking down at the waterfall.

'Come along, we had better go back to the dancers,' said Strong Ingmar. Young Ingmar did not stir, and the old peasant waited patiently. 'If he is of the right kind,' he thought, 'he will neither answer to-day nor to-morrow. We old ones must be patient.'

Whilst they were standing thus, they heard a sharp and angry bark, that seemed to come from a dog running about, high up in the forest.

'Did you hear anything, Ingmar?' asked Strong Ingmar.

'I suppose it is a stray dog,' said Ingmar.

They heard its bark coming nearer; it came rushing towards them as if making straight for the house. The old man clutched Ingmar by the wrist. 'Come in,' he said; 'be quick and come in!'

'What is it?' said Ingmar.

'Come in,' answered Strong Ingmar; 'be quiet and come in.'

Whilst they were running to the house the angry barking appeared to be quite close to them.

'What dog is it?' asked Ingmar several times.

'Get in, get in, I tell you!' The old man pushed Ingmar into the small entrance; he himself remained in the doorway, but

before he locked the door he shouted in a loud voice : ' If there are any of you outside, come in ! He stood there keeping the door ajar, and they came running in from all sides. ' Get in—get in ! ' he shouted, stamping his feet impatiently.

In the meantime those inside grew more and more alarmed ; they all wanted to know what was the matter. At last they were all in, and Strong Ingmar locked the door and bolted it. ' Are you mad, to be running about when you can hear the mountain-dog ? ' he said.

At the same moment the dog's bark could be heard quite close to the house. The dog seemed to run round it several times, and its bark was loud and weird.

' Isn't it a real dog ? ' asked one of the young men.

' You can go out and call to it, if you like, Nils Jansson.'

They were all silent, listening to the barking of the dog, which continued to run round and round the house. They thought it sounded dreadful and uncanny ; they shuddered and grew pale. No, it was not an ordinary dog ; anyone could hear that. It was doubtless some devilry let loose from hell.

The old man of the house was the only one who moved ; he first closed the flue of the fireplace, then he put out the lights.

' No, no,' cried the girls, ' don't put out the lights ! '

' I must do what is best for all of us,' said Strong Ingmar.

One of them took hold of his coat. ' Will the mountain-dog hurt us ? '

' Not *the dog*,' said the old man, ' but what comes after.'

' What comes after ? '

The old man stood still and listened. ' Now everyone must be quiet,' he said.

There was immediately complete silence in the room. Once again the barking of the dog was heard round the house. Then it grew fainter, and one could follow the sound as the dog rushed across the Langfos bogs, and up the mountains on the other side of the valley. Then it ceased altogether.

Then someone could not refrain from saying : ' Now the dog has gone.'

Without saying a word, Strong Ingmar stretched out his arm and struck the speaker on the mouth. Then there was silence again.

Then, far away, from the top of the Klack Mountain, a loud noise was heard. It was like a rushing wind, but it might also be the sound of a horn. Now and then a long-drawn-out note was heard, then roaring and tramping and snorting.

It came tearing down the mountain with a great noise. They heard it on the slope, they heard it on the borders of the forest, they heard it over them. It was as if thunder came rolling over the surface of the earth; it was as if the whole mountain came rushing and tumbling down into the valley. And when it was quite close to them they all bent their heads. 'It will crush us,' they thought—'it will crush us!'

It was not so much the fear of death they felt as terror that it might be the Prince of Darkness rushing through the night with all his host. What terrified them most was that in the midst of the noise they heard shrieks and moans. It wheezed and whined, it roared and laughed, it whistled and hissed. When the noise which had seemed to them like terrific thunder was now over them, they could hear that it was a mingling of groans, of threats, of rage and weeping, of the shrill sound of the horn, of crackling fire, of the wailing of spirits, of the mocking laughter of demons, of a flapping of great wings.

They felt that the terrors of the bottomless pit had been let loose this night, and would overwhelm them. The earth trembled under them, and for a moment the house shook as if it would fall upon them and bury them.

It was as if wild-horses were tearing over the house—their hoofs rang on the roof; as if howling spirits rushed round the corners of the house; and as if bats and owls heavily flapped their wings against the chimney.

Whilst this was happening, someone put his arm round Gertrud's waist and forced her on her knees. She heard Ingmar whisper: 'Let us kneel down, Gertrud, and pray to God.'

A moment before Gertrud thought she would die, so terrible was the fear she felt. 'I am not afraid of death,' she thought; 'but the awful thing is that the power of the Evil One is over us.'

But as soon as Gertrud felt Ingmar's arm her heart began to beat, and her limbs were no longer stiff and cold. She drew closer to him. When only he held her she was not afraid. It was strange. He was, no doubt, himself afraid, and yet, all the same, it seemed to comfort her to be near him.

Then at last the terrible noise grew less, and they heard it further off. It went the same way as the dog, down across the Langfos bogs, and up the forest, below Olof's Peak.

But still the silence continued in Strong Ingmar's house. No one moved, no one said a word; it was as if no one was capable of moving. One could almost have imagined that terror had quenched all life, had it not been that now and again one heard a

deep breath. But for a long, long time no one moved. Some were standing up, leaning against the wall ; others had sunk down on the benches ; most of them were lying on the floor in anxious prayer—but all were motionless, stunned by fear.

Hour after hour passed, and during that time many a one ransacked his soul, and resolved to live a new life, nearer to God and further away from His enemy. For each of those present thought : ' It is something that *I* have done that has caused this to come upon us. All this happened on account of *my* sins. Did I not hear those who went past calling me and mocking me and shouting my name ?'

But as for Gertrud, her only thought was : ' Now I know that I cannot live without Ingmar. I must always be near him, because of the feeling of safety I have when with him.'

Then the day began to break. The faint light of dawn made its way into the room and rested upon the many pale faces. A bird began to sing, and yet another. Strong Ingmar's cow was heard lowing for fodder, and his cat, that never slept in the house on those nights when there was dancing, came to the door and mewed. But no one moved until the sun rose behind the mountains in the east. Then they silently left the house, one after the other, without saying a word or taking leave.

When they came out into the fresh air, they were pale and could hardly breathe. They looked as if they had visited the land of the dead, and had brought back with them some of the awe and impotence of death.

Outside the house they beheld the abomination of desolation. A big fir-tree that stood close to the door had been uprooted and thrown down ; branches and sticks were strewn over the ground ; bats and owls had been crushed against the walls of the house.

Far up the Klack Mountain one could see a broad roadway where all the trees had been hurled down. They could not bear to look at it ; they all hurried down to the village.

As they walked along the sun rose. It was Sunday, and people were up late, but some were already attending to their cattle. An old man came out of his doorway with his Sunday clothes, to brush and air them. From another house father and mother and children came out in their best clothes ; they were, no doubt, going to visit someone in the neighbouring parish.

It was a great comfort to see people so unconcerned, and so unconscious of the terrible things that had happened in the forest during the night.

At last they came to the river, where the houses were closer



together, and then to the village. They were glad to see the church and everything. They were greatly comforted to see things looking just as usual. The signboard at the village shop shone as usual, the horn at the post-office was in its usual place, and the dog at the inn was sleeping, as was its wont, outside its kennel.

They were also glad to see a bird-cherry bush that had sprung out since they last went past it, and the green seats in the Pastor's garden, which must have been put out late last night.

All this quietened them indescribably, but, all the same, no one dared to speak until they had got to their own homes.

When Gertrud stood on the steps outside the school-house, she said to Ingmar: ‘I have danced my last dance, Ingmar!’

‘So have I,’ answered Ingmar.

‘And you will become a Pastor, won't you, Ingmar?—or if you can't become a Pastor, in any case you will be a schoolmaster? One must always be fighting against the Power of Darkness.’

Ingmar looked straight at Gertrud. ‘What did those voices say to you, Gertrud?’ he asked solemnly.

‘They said that I had fallen into sin, and that the Evil One would take possession of me, because I was so fond of dancing.’

‘Now I will tell you what I heard,’ said Ingmar. ‘It seemed to me as if all the old Ingmars threatened and cursed me because I was not going to be a peasant, or work in the forest, or till the soil.’

## CHAPTER VI

### HELLGUM

THE night the young people were dancing at Strong Ingmar's, Tims Halvor was away from home, and his wife, Karin Ingmarsdotter, was sleeping alone in the little room. In the night Karin had a dreadful dream. She thought Elias was still alive, and that she was married to him. She could hear him in the best room, knocking the glasses about, laughing loudly, and singing drinking-songs. Suddenly she heard a terrible noise; it sounded as if he were knocking the tables and chairs to pieces. She was so frightened that she awoke.

But although Karin awoke the noise continued. The earth shook, the windows rattled, the tiles were torn from off the roof, the old pear-tree at the end of the house lashed the wall with its stiff branches. Karin thought she was going to die. 'The last day has come,' she said to herself.

Just when the noise was at its worst, a window-pane broke, and pieces of glass came flying on to the floor. A violent gust of wind rushed whistling through the room, and Karin fancied she heard someone laughing right into her ear with the same laughter she had just heard in her dream. Karin thought the end of all things had come. She had never felt such terrible anguish: her heart stood still, and her limbs grew stiff and cold.

The noise, however, soon ceased, and Karin regained consciousness. The cold night air came rushing through the broken pane, and, after lying quietly for a while, she made up her mind to get up and cover up the hole. But when she tried to get out of bed her legs failed her, and she found that she could not walk.

Karin did not cry for help, but laid quietly down again. 'When I feel less nervous, I shall no doubt be able to walk,' she thought. In a little time she again tried to get up, but her legs refused to obey her. She could not stand, and fell down on the floor by the side of the bed.

In the morning, as soon as the servants were up, the doctor

was sent for. He came at once, but could not understand what was the matter with Karin. She did not appear to have any illness ; he thought it had all come from fright. 'She will soon be all right again,' he said.

Karin listened to the doctor without saying a word. She knew that it was Elias who had been in the next room during the night, and that he was the cause of it. She never expected that she would be able to walk again.

The whole morning Karin sat quietly thinking. She tried to understand why God had allowed this trial to come upon her. She strictly examined her past life, but she could not see that she had committed any sin which deserved so hard a punishment. 'God is unjust to me,' she thought.

She thought she would be less unhappy if she could only see that God had had any right to punish her, and in the afternoon she drove down to Storm's mission-house, where at that time Dagson, the lay-preacher, held meetings, hoping that he could make her bow her head in humility.

Dagson was much thought of as a preacher, but he had never before had so many listeners as that day. A whole crowd of people was gathered round the mission-house, and no one talked about anything else but what had happened at Strong Ingmar's house in the night. The whole parish had been startled, and they had now come to hear the powerful Word of God, that it might drive away their fears.

Not a quarter of those assembled could find room in the mission-house ; but the windows and doors were left wide open, and Dagson's voice was so strong that even those outside the mission-house could hear him.

The preacher knew what had happened, and what his listeners were longing to hear. He began his address with terrible words about hell and the Prince of Darkness. He reminded them of him who moves about in the darkness to catch souls, who lays the snares of sin and the traps of vice for the feet of men. And his listeners shuddered, and saw the world full of devils, who tempted and enticed. Everywhere there was sin and danger. They were wandering amongst pitfalls ; they were like the wild beasts of the forest, hunted and tormented. When Dagson spoke about this, his words went through the room like a piercing blast ; his words were like flames of fire.

Dagson's addresses always reminded one of a forest on fire. Amongst all these devils, and all this smoke and fire, one had the same feeling as when the forest is ablaze around one, when

the fire creeps through the moss upon which one is walking, and clouds of smoke are filling the air one has to breathe, and the heat singes one's hair, and the crackling of the fire sounds in one's ears, and the sparks are ready to put fire to one's clothing. Thus Dagson drove his listeners through fire and smoke and despair. Fire in front of them, fire behind them, fire everywhere, and they saw nothing but destruction before them.

But through all this terror he led them to a green spot in the forest, where everything was peaceful, cool, and secure. In the midst of the flower-strewn meadow Jesus was sitting. He stretched out His arms towards the terror-stricken men and women, and they laid themselves at His feet, and all danger was over, and there was no more fear and no more persecution.

Dagson spoke as he himself felt. When he was only allowed to lie at the feet of Jesus, he was filled with peace and quietness, and feared none of the dangers of life.

When Dagson finished his address, the people were much moved. Several went up to him and thanked him, the tears streaming down their cheeks. They said that what he had said had awakened within them a true belief in God. But Karin Ingmarsdotter sat the whole time motionless, and when the speaker had finished his address she raised her heavy eyelids, and looked at him as if reproaching him for not having anything to give her.

Karin never went to hear Dagson again, but when one of the Baptist preachers, later on in the summer, came to the parish, preaching and baptizing, she went to hear him, and when the Salvation Army began to hold meetings in the village, she also drove to one of them.

A great movement was passing over the parish. At all the meetings people were awakened and converted; it seemed as if everyone found what he needed.

But none of the preachers Karin Ingmarsdotter heard could teach her to become reconciled with the judgment that God had allowed to come upon her.

\* \* \* \* \*

Berger Larsson was the name of a smith, whose smithy lay close to the highroad. The smithy was small and dark, and instead of a window there was a hole with a wooden shutter, and the door was low. Berger Larsson made common knives, mended locks, put iron bands round wheels and on sledges. When he had no other work to do he made nails.

One summer evening Berger Larsson stood in his smithy hard at

work. He stood at an anvil making the heads of the nails ; his eldest son, who was seventeen years old, stood at another anvil hammering out thin iron rods and cutting them over. A second son was blowing the bellows ; a third was carrying coal and turning over the iron which was lying in the furnace. The fourth son was only seven years old ; he gathered up the finished nails and threw them into a trough with water and put them up in bundles.

In the midst of their work a stranger came and stood in the open doorway. He was a tall dark man, and he was obliged to stoop very low to look in.

When Berger Larsson stopped in his work to hear what he wanted, the stranger said : ' You must not mind my looking at you working, although I do not really want anything. I have been a smith myself in my young days, and since then I can't go past a smithy without looking in.'

Berger Larsson involuntarily looked at the stranger's hands ; they were big and sinewy, regular smith's hands.

The smith at once began to question the stranger as to who he was and from where he came. The man answered in a friendly manner without really telling him. Berger thought that he was a clever man and liked him. He went with him outside the smithy, and told him all about himself. It had been hard work for him in the beginning, he said, before his sons could help him ; but now, when they could all help each other, things were going all right. ' You will see that in a few years' time I shall be a well-to-do man,' said Berger.

The stranger smiled a little ; he said that he was pleased to hear that Berger had such good help from his sons. ' Now I will ask you a question,' he said, placing his heavy hand on Berger's shoulder, looking seriously into his eyes. ' As you have such good help from your sons in worldly matters, I suppose you also let them help you in spiritual matters?' Berger stared at him wonderingly. ' I see that this is a new question for you,' said the stranger ; ' think over it till we meet again.'

He went on his way with a smile. Berger Larsson went into the smithy, scratching his head, and again began to work. The stranger's question occupied his mind for several days. He thought it was a strange thing to ask about. ' There is something behind this which I don't understand,' he thought.

\* \* \* \* \*

It was the day after the stranger had been talking with Berger Larsson. Tims Halvor, after his marriage with Karin Ingmarsdotter, had made over his old shop in the village to his brother-in-

law, Kulas Gunnar. Gunnar was away, and in the meantime his wife, Brita Ingmarsdotter, was looking after the shop.

Brita, handsome and stately, stood behind the counter. She had inherited both the name and the looks of her mother, Great Ingmar's good-looking wife. A prettier girl than Brita had never grown up on Ingmars' Farm. Even if Brita did not resemble the old family in her appearance, she was as honourable and conscientious as any of them.

When Gunnar was away, Brita looked after the shop in her own way. When old Corporal Fält came to the shop, tipsy and shaky, and asked for a bottle of beer, Brita said straight out no, and when poor Kolbjörn's Lena came and wanted to buy a fine brooch, Brita sent her home with five pounds of rye-meal.

When Brita was managing the shop, no children dared to come and spend their few coppers in raisins and sweets. The peasant woman who came to buy some light flimsy stuff was sent home by Brita to weave some strong serviceable material on her own loom.

That day Brita had not many customers. She sat quite alone hour after hour. She looked very unhappy, and sat gazing vacantly around her, with despair on her face.

At last she got up, took out a rope, removed the steps from the shop into the room behind, made a loop in the rope, and fastened it to a hook in the ceiling. Brita was just going to place the rope round her neck, when she looked down. The door was at that moment opened, and a tall, dark man entered the room. He had come into the shop without her having heard him, and when he did not see anybody there, he went round behind the counter and opened the door to the next room.

Brita went quietly down the steps: the man did not say anything to her; he slowly went back to the shop. Brita followed him. She had never seen him before; he had black curly hair, a thick beard, keen eyes, and unusually big hands. It was not easy to see if he were a gentleman or a peasant. He was well dressed, but he walked like, and had the bearing of, a labourer. He sat down on a chair close to the door and looked at Brita.

Brita sat quietly down behind the counter; she asked no questions, and only wished he would go away. The man continued looking at her, never for a moment taking his eyes off her. Brita felt as if his eyes held her fast so that she could not move.

Brita grew impatient; she thought to herself: 'I should like to know how you can imagine that it is of any use your sitting there watching me. You must know that another time I shall do what

I wanted to.' Brita in her thoughts went on talking to the man. 'If it were anything likely to pass away, I should not mind your preventing me, but it is quite hopeless.'

But the man remained sitting there, and did not take his eyes from her.

'I must tell you—it does not suit us who come from Ingmars' Farm to keep a shop,' Brita continued in her thoughts. 'You can't imagine how happy Gunnar and I were until he began with the business. People certainly warned me against marrying him; they did not like him, on account of his black hair and keen eyes and his sharp tongue. But we were fond of each other, and we never had a cross word until Gunnar began with the business. From that time,' continued Brita to herself, 'it has not been good between us. I want him to conduct the business in my way. I cannot bear his selling wine and beer to drunkards, and I think he ought not to let people buy anything but what is useful and necessary; but that Gunnar thinks is ridiculous. And neither he nor I can give way, and now we are always quarrelling, and he does not care any more about me.'

She looked at the man with bewildered eyes, as if she were surprised that he did not do as she wished him.

'But surely you can understand that I cannot live under the shame of knowing that he lets the bailiff make executions upon poor people, and take their only cow or a couple of wretched sheep! Things can never be good between us—can you not understand that? Why can't you go away, so that I can put an end to it all?'

But whilst the man sat looking at Brita she became quieter and quieter, and at last began to cry softly. She was touched by his sitting there and taking care of her. It was more than she could have expected from one who did not know her.

As soon as the man saw that Brita was crying, he evidently thought that there was no more danger. He got up and went towards the door. When he was on the doorstep he turned round, looked once more piercingly into Brita's eyes, and said in a deep voice: 'Do thyself no harm, for the time is near when thou shalt live in righteousness.'

Then he went. She could hear his heavy footsteps on the road as he walked away.

Brita went into the back-room. She took down the rope and carried the steps into the shop. Then she sat quietly down on a chest and did not move. The poor woman felt as if for a long time she had been walking in darkness which was so thick that she

could not see her hand before her. She had lost her way, and did not know whither she had come, and every step she took she was afraid of sinking into a quagmire or falling over a precipice. But now someone had called to her that she should not go any further, but sit down and wait until daylight came. She was glad that she need not continue her dangerous wanderings; now she sat still waiting for the dawn.

\* \* \* \* \*

Strong Ingmar had a daughter who was called Anna Lisa. She had lived in Chicago for several years, and had there married a Swede, Hellgum by name, who had gathered round him a few followers who had adopted his faith and teaching. Anna Lisa had come home this summer to pay her old father a visit, and her husband had come with her.

Hellgum spent his time taking long walks about the district. He talked to all the people he met, and when he took leave of them he often laid his big, heavy hand on their shoulder and said some word or other of comfort and exhortation.

Strong Ingmar did not see much of his son-in-law. - The old man was working the whole day with young Ingmar Ingmarsson, who had gone back to live at Ingmars' Farm. The two were building a saw-mill at the Langfossen Waterfall. It was a proud day for Strong Ingmar when the saw-mill was ready, and the first piece of timber was cut into white planks by the shrieking saw-blades.

One evening, when the old man was coming home from work, he met Anna Lisa on the road. She looked frightened, and as if she would like to hide herself. Strong Ingmar increased his pace, and when he reached the house he stood still with a frown on his face. A large rose-bush had stood close to the door as long as he could remember. It had been dearer to him than the apple of his eye; he had never allowed anybody to pluck a rose or a leaf from the bush. Strong Ingmar had always thought something supernatural had lived under the bush. But now the bush had been cut down. It was, of course, his son-in-law, that preacher fellow, who had done it.

Strong Ingmar had his axe in his hand. He clenched his fingers round the handle as he entered the house. Hellgum sat in the room with the Bible before him. He raised his head and looked Strong Ingmar straight in the eyes. Then he went on reading:

"When ye say, We will be as the heathen, as the families of the countries, to serve wood and stone."



"As I live, saith the Lord God, surely with a mighty hand, and with a stretched-out arm, and with fury poured out, will I rule over you."

Without saying a word, Strong Ingmar left the house. That night he slept in the forest. Two days afterwards he and young Ingmar went into the large forest to burn charcoal and cut down timber. They intended to remain there the whole winter.

\* \* \* \* \*

Once or twice Hellgum had attended prayer-meetings, and explained his teaching, which he said was the only true Christianity. But Hellgum was not as eloquent as Dagson. He had not gained a single follower. Those who had met him in the roads and lanes, and only heard him say a few words, had expected great things from him; but when Hellgum had to deliver a lengthy address he became heavy, uninspired, and tedious.

At the time Hellgum came to the parish, Karin Ingmarsdotter was greatly depressed. One rarely heard her say a word. She was still unable to walk, and sat all day in her chair without moving. She did not attempt to hear any more preachers, but sat alone, brooding over her misfortune. Now and then she said to Halvor that she had always heard her father say that the Ingmars need not fear anything if they only walked in the ways of God, but now she knew that not even that was true.

Halvor, in his helplessness, once proposed that she should speak to the new preacher. But Karin said no; she would never again seek help from a preacher.

One Sunday afternoon, in the month of August, Karin sat alone at the window in the best room. A profound silence reigned over the whole farm, and Karin had difficulty in keeping awake. Her head sank lower and lower, and at last she fell asleep.

She was awakened by hearing someone talking just outside the window. She could not see who it was, but the voice was strong and deep. A finer voice she had never heard.

'I see that you think it unlikely, Halvor, that a poor, unlearned man should have found the truth, when so many learned men have failed,' said the voice.

'Yes,' answered Halvor; 'I don't know how you can be so certain.'

'It is Hellgum Halvor is talking to,' thought Karin. If there had been anyone in the room to shut the window, she would have asked him to do so at once. But now she could not help hearing what they said.

'Surely you can see that there must be something wrong about the teaching,' said Hellgum, in his slow, heavy way, 'when you see how badly everything goes in the world?'

← 'How do I know that things go so badly?' Halvor replied.

'Oh,' said Hellgum, 'so much you must have seen and heard, that Christians live in strife and discord, and that they hate each other.'

'Yes, that I have certainly heard, but I don't know whether it comes from the teaching.'

'I will tell you how it came about with me,' said Hellgum. 'I had lately been converted, and I tried to follow all the commandments of Christ, also the most difficult ones. I tell you that if anyone struck me on the one cheek I turned to him the other; and when anyone wanted to take my coat, I also let him have my cloak.'

Hellgum's deep voice grew monotonous, and Karin was again nearly falling asleep.

'But do you know what then happened to me?' continued Hellgum. 'I was at that time working in a factory, and to begin with they laughed at me; but that is not worth speaking about. But when they saw that I did not defend myself, they drove me from my situation, they took the bread out of my mouth, and at last they put the blame on me for a theft one of them had committed, and I had to go to gaol. And if you tried to do as I did you would not fare any better.'

'Perhaps not,' said Halvor, stifling a yawn.

'It is the people amongst whom one lives that makes it impossible for one to be a real Christian,' said Hellgum.

'Well, I suppose that can't be helped,' said Halvor.

'Yes it can,' Hellgum replied.

'You must tell me what happened to you afterwards,' said Halvor.

'Well, in the beginning I was glad for the prison, because there was no one there to hinder me from walking in the ways of righteousness; but then I began to think it was a useless kind of righteousness, to practise all by one's self. "When God has placed so many people in the world," I thought, "they must surely be intended to be of help to each other, instead of corrupting each other." You see,' continued Hellgum. 'I believe the devil has taken something out of the Bible.'

'How can you believe that?' said Halvor. 'He can surely have no power to do that?'

'Yes, he has taken out this commandment: "Ye who wish to

lead a Christian life, ye shall seek help from your fellow-men." You see this is what is missing in religion, and this is why everything goes so badly in the world. As soon as I left the prison,' said Hellgum, 'I went to a fellow-workman and asked him to help me to lead a Christian life. As soon as there were two of us, things at once became better. Now there are thirty of us who live together in a house at Chicago; we share everything, and watch over each other's life, and the way of righteousness lies before us straight and even.'

When Hellgum had said this he raised his voice, and shouted so that he could be heard all over the farm: 'You know, my friend, when you have some difficult work to do, you take people to help you. You know that, if you want to sail across the sea, you don't set out alone in a small boat; but you go on board a large ship, where there are both officers and sailors. And if you were a great man who wanted to vanquish an enemy, you would not go against him single-handed, but you would gather an army around you. Neither shall you set out alone to lead a righteous life, but call together a large host to help you, for a solitary man is poor and helpless and wretched. But I tell you that the community I have founded is the real, holy Jerusalem that has come down from heaven. And you shall know it by this: that the gifts of the Spirit, which fell upon the first Christians, have also fallen upon us. For some of us hear the voice of God, and some prophesy, and some heal the sick.'

And now Halvor interrupted him, as if he had at last heard something which interested him. 'Can you heal the sick?' he said.

'Yes,' answered Hellgum. 'I can heal those who have faith in me.'

'It is hard to believe something different from what one has learned as a child,' said Halvor thoughtfully.

'Yet I believe, Halvor, that you will some day dwell in the heavenly Jerusalem,' said Hellgum.

Then there was silence. Hellgum probably wanted to give Halvor time to think over what he had said. Shortly afterwards Karin heard him say good-bye.

Halvor came into the room where Karin was sitting. As soon as he saw her, he said: 'I suppose you have heard everything Hellgum said?'

'Yes,' Karin answered.

'Did you hear him say that he could heal those who had faith in him?'

'Yes,' said Karin ; ' but even health can be bought too dearly. I will have no other faith than the one my father had before me.'

Some weeks after Karin was again sitting in the best room. It was now autumn, the wind blew round the house, and the fire crackled on the hearth. Karin was more susceptible to the cold now that she could not walk about. There was no one else in the room but her little daughter, who was about a year old, and who had just learned to walk. She was sitting on the floor close to her mother playing.

Whilst Karin was sitting there the door opened, and a tall, dark man came in. He had black, curly hair, keen eyes, and large sinewy hands. Before Karin heard him say a word, she guessed that it was Hellgum.

The man said good-day and asked after Halvor. Karin answered that her husband had gone to a meeting. She thought he would soon be back. Hellgum sat down ; he did not say anything, but now and then cast a hasty glance at Karin.

'I have heard that you are ill,' said Hellgum when he had been sitting there for some time.'

'Yes,' answered Karin ; ' I have not been able to walk for six months.'

'I have thought of coming here to pray for you,' said the preacher. Karin was silent ; she grew stiff and unapproachable. 'Karin has perhaps heard that I have received the gift from God to heal the sick.'

Karin raised her eyelids and gave him a distrustful look. 'I must thank you for thinking of me, but it is of no use, for I do not easily change my faith,' she said.

'It is possible that God will help you all the same,' said Hellgum, 'as you have always striven to lead a righteous life.'

'I am afraid I am not sufficiently in favour with God for Him to help me.'

They sat in silence for a couple of minutes ; then Hellgum said : 'Has Mother Karin ever asked herself why this visitation has come upon her ?'

Karin made no reply. It seemed as if she were again wrapped up in her own thoughts.

'Something tells me that God has done this that His name may be still more honoured.'

When Karin heard this she grew angry. Two bright-red spots appeared on her cheeks. She thought it was most arrogant of Hellgum to think that this illness had come upon her in order that he might have the opportunity of healing her.

The preacher rose, went straight up to Karin, and laid his hand on her head. 'Do you wish me to pray for you?' he asked.

Karin immediately felt a current of life and health flow through her, but all the same she shook off his hand, and lifted her arm as if to strike him. She could not find words quickly enough.

Hellgum drew back and went towards the door. 'One shall not refuse that which God sends,' he said.

'No,' Karin answered. 'What God sends I suppose one is obliged to accept.'

'But I tell you that to-day a great joy will come upon this house,' said Hellgum. Karin was silent. 'Think of me when that comes to pass which I expect,' he said, and left the room.

Karin sat very straight in her chair; the red spots remained for a long time on her cheeks. She was very angry. 'As if God would have sent me this in order that this man should come and heal me!' she thought.

At the same moment Karin saw her little girl crawling across the floor towards the fireplace. The child had become attracted by the fire. She screamed with delight, and crept towards it as fast as she could. Karin called to her, but the little one did not heed her. She tried hard to get on to the fireplace; she failed once or twice, but at last she succeeded in getting on to the hearth, where the fire was burning.

'Oh, God, help me! God, help me!' cried Karin. She began to shout for help, although she knew that there was no one near.

The little girl bent laughingly over the fire, when suddenly a burning piece of wood fell on to her little yellow frock. The same moment Karin stood erect on her feet, ran to the fireplace, and grasped hold of the child. It was just after she had shaken the sparks off the child's frock, and seen that her little daughter was unhurt, that she thought of what had happened: that she could stand erect, that she had been able to walk, that she could still walk.

Karin felt more stirred in her soul than she had ever done before in her life, and at the same time she was filled with a great bliss. Karin felt that she was under God's special care and protection, and that He had sent a holy man to her house to help her.

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At that time Hellgum often stood in the little porch outside Strong Ingmar's house and looked over the country. The view, before him grew more beautiful every day. The ground was quite yellow, and all the trees were either a brilliant red or yellow.

Here and there was a whole little forest as radiant as a billowy sea of gold. All over the fir-covered hills one could see yellow patches ; they were the birches which had gone astray and taken root amongst the fir-trees.

As a poor gray hut can shine and lighten up when there is a fire in it, so did this poor Swedish landscape flame with a wonderful splendour. Everything was as yellow and as strangely radiant as one could imagine a landscape to be on the surface of the sun. But when Hellgum stood looking at all this, he thought of all the efforts he had made during the whole summer to win over this parish, and he felt as if they had all fallen to the ground as withered leaves.

When three days had passed, Tims Halvor came down to the house in the evening, and asked Hellgum and Anna Lisa to come up to Ingmars' Farm and have a cup of coffee.

When they came to the farm, the big yard had been made neat and tidy. All the withered leaves had been swept away, and the farm implements and the carts, which at other times nearly filled the yard, had been put to one side. 'They must be expecting a great many people,' thought Anna Lisa. At that moment Halvor opened the door to the best room. It was full of people ; they all sat solemnly on the long benches along the walls as if they were expecting someone. Anna Lisa saw at once that they were the leading people in the parish.

The first she discovered were Ljung Björn Olofsson and his wife, Märta Ingmarsdotter, also Kulas Gunnar and his wife. Then she saw Krister Larsson and Israel Tomasson and their wives. They also belonged to the Ingmar family. Then she noticed Hök Matts Eriksson and his son Gabriel, Gunhild, the daughter of the magistrate, and several others. There were about twenty people altogether.

When Hellgum and Anna Lisa had gone round and shaken hands with them all, Tims Halvor said : 'Those who are assembled here have been thinking over what Hellgum has told us. Most of us belong to an old family who have always been wishful to walk in the ways of God, and if Hellgum can help us to do this, then we will follow him.'

## CHAPTER VII

### THE NEW WAY

It was the following spring, soon after the snow had vanished from the ground. Ingmar and Strong Ingmar had just come down to the village to start the saw-mill. The whole winter they had spent in the forest, busy burning charcoal and cutting down timber. And when Ingmar came down to the low-lying country, he felt as if he were a bear that had just crept out from its lair. He could hardly bear to see the sun shining in the open sky, but went about blinking his eyes as if he could not stand the light. The roar of the waterfall and the buzz of human voices also troubled him, and all the noise that filled his ears at Ingmars' Farm was simply painful to him. But at the same time he was very glad for it all. Heaven knows that he did not show it, either in his manners or his walk, but that spring he felt as young as the new shoots on the birch-trees.

It is impossible to describe how good it seemed to him to sleep in a well-made bed and to eat properly-cooked food. And then to be at home with Karin, who looked after him, if possible, more tenderly than a mother. She had had new clothes made for him, and she frequently brought him from the kitchen some dainty or other as if he were a little boy. And what a lot of wonderful things had happened whilst he was living in the forest! Ingmar had gone away the day after the great meeting, and had been away ever since. He had only heard some vague rumours about Hellgum's teaching. But now to hear Karin and Halvor talking about how happy they were, and how they and their friends tried to help each other to walk in the ways of God, was simply elevating.

'We are so sure that you will join us,' said Karin.

Ingmar answered that he felt very much inclined to, but that he wanted to think the matter over, all the same.

'The whole winter I have been longing for you to come and

share our joy,' said Karin, 'for we no longer dwell on earth, but in the new Jerusalem which has come down from heaven.'

It was also good news for Ingmar that Hellgum was still in the neighbourhood. Last summer Hellgum had often come down to the saw-mill and talked with Ingmar, and they had become very good friends. Ingmar thought Hellgum was the best man he had ever met. He had never seen anyone who was so manly, so confident, and who relied so implicitly upon himself.

Sometimes, when they were busy, Hellgum had taken off his coat and helped them. Ingmar was quite dumb with astonishment; he had never seen anyone so quick at his work. At present Hellgum was away for a few days, but he was expected back again soon.

'When Hellgum has only spoken with you, I am sure you will do as we have done,' said Karin. And Ingmar thought so, too, although he was uneasy at doing anything of which his father had not given his approval. 'It is just what father always taught us, that we should always walk in the ways of God,' said Karin.

Everything seemed to be so bright. Ingmar had never thought that it could be so delightful to be amongst his fellow-men again. There was only one thing wanting: no one ever spoke about the schoolmaster or Gertrud; and that was annoying, because Ingmar had not seen Gertrud for a whole year. Before he had never had to wait like this. Last summer hardly a day went by without someone speaking about the Storms.

He thought it was only by accident that they were never mentioned. But it was so tiresome, when one felt too shy to ask questions, and no one spoke about the persons of whom one was most anxious to hear.

But if Ingmar was happy and content, Strong Ingmar was just the opposite. The old man was silent and sulky, and difficult to please.

'I think you are longing to get back to the wood,' Ingmar said to him one afternoon, when they were sitting on a piece of timber, eating their afternoon meal.

'Yes, the Lord knows that I do,' said the old man. 'I only wish that I had never come back.'

'What is the matter?' asked Ingmar.

'It is an odd thing for you to ask,' answered Strong Ingmar. 'I thought you knew as well as I that it is all wrong with Hellgum.'

Ingmar answered that, on the contrary, he had heard that Hellgum had become a great man.



'Yes, he has become so great a man that he has turned the whole parish upside down.'

Ingmar could not help thinking how strange it was that Strong Ingmar never showed any signs of caring for his own family. He cared for nothing but Ingmars' Farm and the Ingmarssons, and Ingmar felt that he ought to stand up for the old man's son-in-law.

'I think what he teaches is right,' said Ingmar.

'Oh, you think so, do you?' said the old man, looking grimly at him. 'Do you think Great Ingmar would have thought so?'

Ingmar answered that his father would have been ready to join anyone wanting to lead a righteous life.

'You think, then, that Strong Ingmar would have been ready to call all those who did not belong to their community devils and antichrists, and that he would have nothing to do with old friends, because they kept to their old creed?'

'I don't think people like Hellgum and Halvor and Karin behave like that.'

'You had better try and go against them, and then you will find out what they think of you.'

Ingmar cut large hunches off his bread, and went on eating in silence. It was a pity, he thought, that Strong Ingmar was in such low spirits.

'Oh yes,' said the old man after a pause, 'it is a funny world. You, the son of Great Ingmar, have nothing you can call your own. But my Anna Lisa and her husband are living amongst the big folks. The best people in the parish bow and scrape to them, and they go from one feast to another.'

Ingmar went on eating. He did not think there was anything to reply to. But Strong Ingmar began again: 'It is a nice teaching, that is certain, and that is why half the parish has followed him. No one has ever before had such power in the parish as Hellgum has, not even Great Ingmar. He separates children from their parents by preaching that those who follow him must not dwell amongst sinners. Hellgum has only to beckon, and brother leaves brother, friend leaves friend, and the bridegroom his bride. He has had such power that this winter there has been strife and discord in every single home. Yes, there is no doubt Great Ingmar would have liked this kind of thing. He would no doubt have approved of all Hellgum's doings. I am sure he would.'

Ingmar felt inclined to get up and leave him. He felt sure Strong Ingmar was exaggerating, but all the same it made him feel dull.

'I don't deny that Hellgum does wonderful things: look at the way in which he can make his followers keep together, and the way in which he can make people friends who formerly would have nothing to do with each other, and the way in which he takes from the rich and gives to the poor, and the way in which he makes them watch over each other. But I think it is hard upon those who are denounced as children of the devil, and who are left out of it altogether. But, of course, you don't think so.'

Ingmar felt angry with the old man because of the way in which he spoke of Hellgum.

'And we used to live so peacefully in the parish,' continued Strong Ingmar. 'But that is all over now. In Great Ingmar's time we were all of one mind, and people used to say that we were the happiest and most united parish in Dalarna. But now we are all divided into angels and devils, into sheep and goats.'

'I wish we could get the saw-mill started,' thought Ingmar, 'and then I should hear no more of all this talk.'

'It won't be very long, either, before it is all over between you and me,' continued Strong Ingmar. 'If you join them, they will never allow you to have anything to do with me.'

Ingmar swore and stood up. 'If you go on talking like this, it is not at all unlikely,' he said. 'I think you must understand that it is no use your trying to set me against my own people, or against Hellgum, who is the best man I know.'

Ingmar succeeded in silencing the old man with these words. Shortly afterwards Strong Ingmar left his work. He wanted to go down to the village and see his friend Corporal Fält. He had not talked with a sensible person for a long time, he said.

Ingmar was pleased that he went. When one has been away for a long time, one does not want to hear anything disagreeable; one wants things to be bright and happy.

The next day Ingmar went down to the saw-mill at five o'clock in the morning. Strong Ingmar was there before him.

'To-day you can see Hellgum,' said the old man. 'He and Anna Lisa came home late last night. I think they have hurried home from all their feasting to convert you.'

'Are you beginning again?' said Ingmar.

The old man's words had worried him all through the night; he could not get rid of them. But now he was determined not to hear anything more said against his relations.

Strong Ingmar was silent for a moment; then he began to laugh to himself.

'What are you laughing about?' said Ingmar. He was just going to set the saw-mill going.

'Oh, I was only thinking about the schoolmaster's Gertrud!'

'What about her?'

'They said yesterday, down in the village, that she was the only person who had any influence over Hellgum.'

'What has Gertrud to do with Hellgum?'

Ingmar did not start the saw-mill, for had he done so he would not have been able to hear anything.

The old man looked inquiringly at him. 'I thought I was not allowed to say any more on that subject.'

Ingmar smiled. 'You always manage to arrange things so that you get your own way,' he said.

'It was that silly girl Gunhild, the daughter of Lars Clementsson, who is Chairman of the Parish Council.'

'She is not a silly girl,' interrupted Ingmar.

'You may call her what you like; but it so happened that she was present at Ingmars' Farm when this new sect was founded. As soon as she came home, she said to her parents that she had accepted the only true faith, and that she would have to leave her home and live at Ingmars' Farm. Her parents asked why she wanted to leave them. She said that it was in order that she might lead a righteous life. They said that they thought she might also do that with them. She replied that one could not do that unless one lived amongst those who had the same faith. "Will everybody, then, have to go and live at Ingmars' Farm?" asked Lars Clementsson. No, it was only she; the others had true Christians in their own homes. Her father is a good man, you know, and both he and her mother tried to talk Gunhild to reason by kindness; but the girl was determined to go, and made her parents angry, so at last Lars Clementsson locked her up in the small room, and said that she should stop there until she had come to her senses.'

'I thought it was Gertrud you wanted to talk about,' interrupted Ingmar.

'I am coming to Gertrud, if you will only wait. But I may as well tell you at once that the next morning, when Gertrud and Mother Storm were sitting in the kitchen spinning, Lars Clementsson's wife came to see them. They were quite frightened when they saw her. She, who is otherwise always in such good spirits, had evidently nearly been crying her eyes out. "What is the matter? what has happened? why do you look so distressed?" Then Lars Clementsson's wife said: "How can one look otherwise when one

has lost the dearest of one's possessions?" I should like to beat them,' said the old man.

'Who?' asked Ingmar.

'Hellgum and Anna Lisa,' said Strong Ingmar. 'They had been to Lars Clementsson's house in the night, and taken Gunhild away with them.'

A cry of surprise escaped Ingmar.

'I am almost inclined to think that Anna Lisa has married a pirate,' said the old man. 'In the middle of the night they came and tapped at the window of the small room, and asked Gunhild why she had not gone to Ingmars' Farm. She said that her parents had locked her in. It was the devil who had made them do it, said Hellgum. The parents overheard all this.'

'Did they hear it?'

'Yes, they were sleeping in the next room, and they heard everything Hellgum said to entice their daughter.'

'But they could have sent them about their business.'

'No, they thought Gunhild should decide for herself; they could not imagine that she would leave them, considering what good parents they had been to her. They lay there expecting her to say that she would never leave her old parents.'

'Did she go?'

'Yes, Hellgum did not give in until she went with them. And when Lars Clementsson and his wife heard that she could not resist him, they let her go. There are some people like that, you know. But in the morning the mother repented that they had let her do so, and she asked her husband to drive to Ingmars' Farm and fetch her back again. "No," he said, "I will never fetch her or see her again, unless she comes back of her own free will." Then Lars Clementsson's wife went to the school-house to ask Gertrud if she would not go and talk to Gunhild.'

'Did Gertrud go?'

'Yes, she went and spoke to Gunhild, but Gunhild did not take any notice of what she said.'

'But I have not seen Gunhild at our house,' said Ingmar thoughtfully.

'No, because she has gone back to her parents now. It happened in this way: When Gertrud had left Gunhild, she met Hellgum. She went straight up to him, and gave him a piece of her mind. She was so angry that I don't think she would have minded striking him.'

'Ay, Gertrud can talk,' said Ingmar.

'She said to Hellgum that she had once seen a picture representing a heathen warrior carrying off a maiden, and that was just what he had been doing.

'What did Hellgum say to that?'

'He answered that he was not as bad as she thought. And in the afternoon he brought Gunhild back to her parents and made it up with them.'

When Strong Ingmar had finished his story, Ingmar looked up and smiled. 'Gertrud is a brick,' he said, 'and Hellgum is a good fellow, although he does get rather wild notions.'

'Oh, is that how you take it?' said Strong Ingmar. 'I thought you would have been surprised at Hellgum giving in like this to Gertrud.'

To this Ingmar made no reply.

Strong Ingmar was also silent for a while; then he began afresh: 'A lot of people asked after you at church. They wanted to know which side you meant to take.'

'I suppose it is the same to them which side I take.'

'Well, perhaps so,' said the old man; 'but I believe that people expect you to save them from Hellgum.'

Ingmar looked quite unhappy. 'But I don't know who is in the right.'

'I will tell you what,' said Strong Ingmar: 'in this parish they are accustomed to have someone to lead them; Great Ingmar is dead, and the schoolmaster has lost his influence, and the Pastor never had any, so now they follow Hellgum, as you keep in the background. You may be sure that our being away in the winter has saved us from a lot of worry. I believe it was worst in the beginning, before people became accustomed to this converting epidemic, and to being called devils and hell-hounds. But the worst of all was when the converted children also began to preach.'

'Oh, the children preached as well, did they?' said Ingmar doubtfully.

'Hellgum told them that they should serve God instead of playing, so they took upon themselves to convert their elders. They laid in ambush along the roadside, and fell upon the people who went past, with such words as these: 'Will not you fight against the devil? Will you continue to live in sin?'

Ingmar neither could nor would believe what Strong Ingmar told him. 'It is the old corporal who has put all this into your head,' he said.

'That is just what I was going to tell you,' said Strong Ingmar.

'It is all over with Fält. And when I think that all this has come from Ingmars' Farm, I feel as if I could not look people straight in the face.'

'Has anyone done anything to Fält?' asked Ingmar.

'Yes, it is all these children. One evening, when they had nothing else to do, it struck them that they might go and convert Fält, for, of course, they had heard that Fält was a great sinner.'

'But in olden days all the children were as frightened of Fält as of a troll,' said Ingmar.

'Yes, these children were also afraid; but they had, no doubt, made up their minds to do something very heroic. They went to Fält's one evening; he was sitting in his room making his porridge. When they opened the door and saw Fält, with his fierce moustache and his broken nose and his blind eye, sitting before the fire, they were so frightened that two or three of the youngest ran away. But a dozen or so went into the room, and knelt down on the floor in a circle round the old soldier, and began to sing and pray.'

'But did he not turn them out?' asked Ingmar.

'If only he had!' said Strong Ingmar. 'I can't understand what he was thinking about. I should think the poor fellow had been sitting and thinking of how lonely and deserted he was in his old age. And then, I suppose, it was because they were children. He had no doubt been sorry that they were always afraid of him. And when he saw all their upturned eyes full of bright tears, they must have got the better of him. The children had expected that he would make a rush at them and strike them. They sang and prayed, but they were ready to run away as soon as he moved. Then one or two of them saw that Fält's face began to work. "Now he is coming," they thought, and got up to run away. But the old man blinked his eyes, and a tear ran down his cheek. Then, of course, the children cried "Hallelujah!" and now, as I told you, it is all over with Fält. He does nothing but run about to meetings, and fasts, and prays, and hears the voice of our Lord.'

'I can't see that there is any misfortune in that,' said Ingmar; 'Fält was killing himself with drink.'

'You have got so many friends to lose that that kind of thing does not matter to you. Perhaps you would even approve of the children trying to convert the schoolmaster?'

'I can't imagine those children trying to tackle Storm,' said Ingmar. He was amazed. There must, after all, be something in what Strong Ingmar had said about their having turned the parish upside down.

'But they did, though. One evening, when Storm was sitting in the school-room busy with his books, a score of them came in and began to preach to him.'

'What did Storm do?' said Ingmar, who could not help laughing.

'He was so astonished at first that he could neither say nor do anything, but just at that moment Hellgum happened to come into the kitchen to speak to Gertrud.'

'Was Hellgum with Gertrud?'

'Yes, he goes about from house to house trying to convert people. When Gertrud heard the noise in the school-room, she said to Hellgum, "You have just come in time to see something new, Hellgum. It seems that for the future the children are going to teach the schoolmaster." Then Hellgum grew very red. He could see that matters were going too far. He turned the children out, and there was an end to it.'

Ingmar noticed that Strong Ingmar looked at him in a peculiar manner. It was like a hunter watching a wounded bear, and wondering if it were necessary to give him another shot. 'What do you really expect me to do?' said Ingmar.

'What should I expect you to do? you are only a lad. I cannot expect anything from one who has neither house nor land.'

'I declare I believe you would like me to kill Hellgum?'

'They said down in the village that everything would come right if only someone could induce Hellgum to go away.'

'That there should be discord and strife when a new teaching springs up is nothing fresh,' said Ingmar.

'It would in any case be a good opportunity for you to show people of what stuff you are made,' continued Strong Ingmar obstinately.

Ingmar suddenly turned his back upon the old man and set the saw-mill going.

At eight o'clock Ingmar went home to the farm to breakfast. There was, as usual, a very good spread awaiting him, and both Halvor and Karin were very kind. As soon as Ingmar saw them he felt as if he could not believe a word of all Strong Ingmar's talk. He became quite light-hearted, and felt sure that the old man had exaggerated.

When the farm hands had finished their meal and gone to their work, Ingmar said very quietly: 'Have you not seen anything of the schoolmaster lately, Karin?'

He was not quite sure whether he put this question to try Karin, or to find out something about Gertrud.

'No,' said Karin quickly. 'I have nothing to do with such ungodly people.'

Ingmar was silent for a long time, for it was an answer which gave him much to think about. Was it best to speak or to keep silent? If he spoke, he might quarrel with his family, but at the same time he did not want them to think that he agreed with them in what was wrong. 'I have never seen any ungodliness at the schoolmaster's,' he said, so quietly that they could hardly hear him. 'And I have lived with them for four years.'

The same thought came to Karin that Ingmar had had a moment ago: she did not know whether to speak or not. But she was bound to speak the truth, even if it pained Ingmar, and therefore she said that if people would not obey the call of God they must be ungodly. *What is it?*

Halvor now joined in. 'It is a matter of the utmost importance how children are brought up.'

'Storm has brought up the whole parish, and you, too, Halvor.'

'But he has not taught us to lead a righteous life,' said Karin.

'I thought you had always tried to do that, Karin.'

'I will tell you how it was to live after the old teaching, Ingmar. It was like walking on a round beam: one moment one stands, and the next one falls. But if I let my fellow-Christians hold me by the hand and support me, then I can walk along the narrow path of righteousness without falling.'

'Yes,' Ingmar said; 'but then there is no art in that.'

'It is difficult enough even then, but it is no longer impossible.'

'But what was the matter with the schoolmaster?' asked Ingmar.

'Those who belong to us took their children out of the school. We do not wish the children to hear anything of the old teaching.'

'But what did the schoolmaster say to all this?'

'He said that by law the children must attend school.'

'I think so, too.'

'Then he sent the constable to Ljung Björn's, and to Kulas Gunnar's, to fetch their children.'

'And now you are unfriendly with the Storms?'

'Yes, we only keep to ourselves.'

'You are unfriendly with the whole parish, I think.'

'We keep away from those who only want to entice us to sin.'

The longer the three talked together, the more softly they spoke. They were afraid for every word. They all felt the conversation was taking a painful turn.



'But I can tell you about Gertrud,' said Karin. She tried to adopt a more cheerful tone. 'Hellgum has talked much with her this winter; he says that she means to join us this evening.'

'Oh, she means to join you, does she?' said Ingmar. 'Many things are happening here whilst one is working in the dark forest.'

Ingmar had the impression that Hellgum the whole time must have been trying to insinuate himself with Gertrud, and laying snares to entice her. He grew quite pale and his lips trembled.

'But what is to become of me?' said Ingmar.

'You shall join us in our faith,' said Halvor decidedly. 'Hellgum has now come back, and as soon as you have talked with him you will join us.'

'It is possible that I may not change,' said Ingmar.

Then Halvor and Karin became silent.

'It is possible that I will not have any faith but my father's,' Ingmar went on.

'Do not say anything until you have talked with Hellgum,' said Karin.

'But if I do not join you, I suppose you will not care to have me in your house any longer,' said Ingmar, rising. 'I should like to know how it will be with the saw-mill then?' continued Ingmar.

Halvor sat and looked at Karin; they were both afraid of saying anything. 'You must remember, Ingmar, that there is no one in the whole world of whom we are so fond as you,' said Halvor.

'Yes, but what about the saw-mill?' asked Ingmar.

'You shall first finish your timber, Ingmar.'

When Halvor refused to answer Ingmar's question, a light seemed to dawn upon him.

'Perhaps Hellgum will rent the saw-mill?' he asked.

Halvor turned, and said soothingly to Ingmar: 'Let Hellgum speak to you.'

'Oh, I will let him speak to me,' said Ingmar. 'But I should like to know what I may expect.'

'You cannot doubt, Ingmar, that we wish you well.'

'But Hellgum is to have the saw-mill,' said Ingmar.

'We should like to find some suitable occupation for Hellgum, so that he could remain here. We have thought that you and he might become partners if you accept the true faith. Hellgum is clever at his work.'

'I don't know since when you have become afraid of speaking

out, Halvor,' said Ingmar. 'I only want to know if it is your intention to let Hellgum have the saw-mill.'

'If you oppose the will of God, he shall have it,' said Halvor.

'Thank you, Halvor. Now I know how advantageous it would be for me to join your faith.'

'You know it was not meant in that way,' said Karin.

'I understand quite well what you mean,' said Ingmar. He went quickly out of the room. He was afraid to remain there.

Ingmar did not go back to the saw-mill. He went down to the village and straight to the school-house.

When Ingmar opened the gate it was raining—a regular mild spring rain. In the schoolmaster's garden things were already budding and sprouting; the earth grew green so quickly that one could almost fancy one could see the grass growing. Gertrud stood on the steps watching the rain, and two large bird-cherry trees, that were nearly sprung out, spread their branches over her.

When Ingmar saw Gertrud he stood still in silent astonishment. When he had last seen her she was little more than a child; but during the year that he had been away she had grown into a proud, stately maiden. Gertrud was now quite grown up, and very pretty she was; her head was well set on her fine shoulders, her skin was white and soft, with a fresh colour in her cheeks. Her eyes were deep and thoughtful, and her expression, which before had been playful and merry, had now become serious and full of gentle longing.

When Ingmar saw Gertrud like this, his heart was filled with happiness. Everything around him became quiet and solemn; it was as if the ringing of great bells had brought the peace of a holy-day. Everything was so beautiful that he felt as if he must fall upon his knees and thank God.

But when Gertrud met Ingmar's gaze, he saw that her face stiffened, and that the shadow of a frown passed over her forehead.

Ingmar felt a sudden, quick pain, as from a dart. 'They will take her from you; they have already taken her from you.'

Without the slightest introduction, Ingmar asked Gertrud if it were true that she intended to join Hellgum and his followers.

Gertrud answered that it was true.

Ingmar asked her fiercely if she had considered that the Hellgumians would not allow her to have anything to do with people who did not think as they did.

Gertrud answered quietly that she had considered it.

your 'Have you got permission from your father and mother?' asked  
said Ingmar.

'No,' answered Gertrud. 'They do not know anything  
about it.'

ould 'But, Gertrud——'

'Be quiet, Ingmar: I must do it to find peace. God compels  
me.'

He 'Oh,' Ingmar shouted, 'it is not God, but it is——'

Gertrud turned sharply round towards him.

the Ingmar only said: 'I will tell you one thing: I shall never join  
Hellgum. If you join them, then we are parted for ever.'

Gertrud looked as if she did not understand how this could  
affect her.

'Do not do it, Gertrud,' Ingmar begged.

'You must not think I am doing it lightly. I have thought it  
all carefully over.'

'You must think it over once more.'

Gertrud turned impatiently away from him.

'You must also think the matter over for Hellgum's sake,' said  
Ingmar threateningly, seizing Gertrud by the arm, so as not to let  
her go.

Gertrud shook off his hand. 'Are you quite out of your senses,  
Ingmar?'

'Yes,' Ingmar answered. 'I am sick of this Hellgum. We  
must have an end to it.'

'What must we have an end to?'

'I will tell you that another time.'

Gertrud shrugged her shoulders.

'Good-bye then, Gertrud,' said Ingmar, 'and remember what I  
say: You shall never join the Hellgumians.'

'What do you mean to do, Ingmar?'

'Good-bye, Gertrud, and think over what I have said,' Ingmar  
shouted. He was already halfway down the gravel walk.

Ingmar wended his steps homewards. He went up to Strong  
Ingmar's house to speak to Hellgum. When he came up to the  
door, he heard several loud and eager voices. There appeared to  
be several people inside, and Ingmar at once turned back. As he  
went he heard a man say in a very loud voice: 'We are three  
brothers who have come a long distance to call you to account,  
Johan Hellgum, for our youngest brother, who two years ago  
went to America. There he joined your community, and we have  
now received a letter telling us that he has gone out of his mind  
by speculating over your teaching.'

Ingmar quickly went away. There were apparently others beside himself who had cause for complaint against Hellgum, and they were all equally helpless. Ingmar wondered what the three brothers meant by saying they would call Hellgum to account.

Ingmar went down to the saw-mill. Strong Ingmar was already hard at work. Through the whistling of the saws and the roar of the waterfall Ingmar fancied he heard a cry, which seemed to come from Strong Ingmar's house. But he took no notice of it. He could think of nothing but his strong hatred of Hellgum. He thought of all that Hellgum had taken from him—both Gertrud and his sisters, and the saw-mill and his home.

Once more he thought he heard a cry. It occurred to him that Hellgum and the three strangers were quarrelling. In his anger, he thought it would not matter much if they should do for Hellgum.

Again there was a sharp cry for help, and Ingmar ran quickly up the hill. The nearer he came, the more distinctly he heard Hellgum's cry for help, and when he got to the house it seemed almost to shake with the fierceness of their struggle.

Ingmar always opened a door very quietly and cautiously, and now he did so even more warily. He went very softly into the room. He saw Hellgum pressed against the wall, defending himself with a short axe. The three strangers, who were all strong, powerful men, were attacking him with large pieces of wood, which they used like clubs. They had no guns, and therefore it was evident that they had only come to give him a good thrashing; but as he had made a bold stand against them, their fury got the better of them, and now Hellgum's life was in danger. They hardly looked at Ingmar; they thought he was only a big, clumsy lad.

For a moment Ingmar stood quietly watching. It seemed to him like a dream, where what one desires most appears before one, without one knowing from whence it comes. Now and then Hellgum uttered a cry for help.

'Don't imagine that I am silly enough to help you,' thought Ingmar.

One of the men hit Hellgum on the head with such force that he let go the axe and fell to the ground. The others flung away the pieces of wood, drew their knives, and threw themselves upon Hellgum. Then a thought rushed through Ingmar's mind. There was an old tradition in his family that they all, once in their life, were bound to commit a dastardly or an evil deed. Had his turn now come?

Suddenly one of the men felt himself seized from behind by

two strong arms that lifted him into the air and threw him out of the door. The second had hardly time to get up before he shared the same fate, and the third, who managed to get on to his feet, got a blow which sent him backwards the same way.

When he had thrust them all out, Ingmar went and stood in the doorway. 'Would you not like to come back again?' he cried, with a laugh.

He would not have minded if they had. It did him good to use his whole strength.

The three brothers looked as if they were quite ready to begin again. Then one of them shouted that they had better be off; there was someone coming. But they were furious that they had not done for Hellgum, and as they turned to run off, one of them rushed back and stabbed Ingmar in the neck. 'That's for interfering with our business!' he shouted.

Ingmar fell to the ground, and the man ran away with a mocking laugh.

A minute or two later Karin entered the house. She found Ingmar sitting on the doorstep, with a wound in his neck. In the room she saw Hellgum. He had got up, and stood leaning against the wall. He held the axe in his hand, and the blood was streaming down his face. Karin had not seen the three men. She thought it was Ingmar who had attacked Hellgum and wounded him.

Karin was so horrified that her knees shook. 'No, no, it is not possible,' she thought. 'No one in our family can be a murderer.' At that moment her mother's history came into her mind. 'That is from where it comes,' she murmured.

Karin hurried past Ingmar up to Hellgum.

'No, no, Ingmar first!' Hellgum cried.

'Surely one ought not to look after the murderer before his victim,' said Karin.

'Ingmar first! Ingmar first!' shouted Hellgum. He was in such a state of agitation that he raised the axe against her. 'It is he who has overcome the murderers and saved my life.'

When Karin at last understood how matters were, and turned round to look after Ingmar, she found that he had got up and gone out of the house. Karin saw him stagger across the yard.

Karin ran after him. 'Ingmar, Ingmar!' she cried.

Ingmar went on without even turning his head.

Karin overtook him without much difficulty. She laid her hand on his arm. 'Stand still, Ingmar, so that I can bind up your wound.'

Ingmar shook her off and went on. He walked quite like a blind man, without heeding road or pathway. The blood from the wound had made its way underneath his clothes, and had run down into one of his shoes and filled it. With every step he took the blood was pressed out of his shoe, and left a red mark on the ground.

Karin went behind him, wringing her hands. 'Stop, Ingmar! Do stop, Ingmar! Where are you going? Stop, Ingmar!'

Ingmar went on right into the forest, where there was no one who could help him.

Karin never looked away from his shoe, which was full of blood. Every minute the footprints grew more and more red.

'He is going into the forest to lie down and bleed to death,' thought Karin. 'God bless you, Ingmar, because you helped Hellgum! Karin said softly. 'It needed a man's courage and strength to do it.'

Ingmar went on without heeding her. Karin ran past him and stood in his way. He went to one side without looking at her. He only mumbled: 'Go and help Hellgum!'

'Listen to me, Ingmar! Halvor and I were very grieved at what we talked about together this morning, and I was coming to tell Hellgum that, whatever happened, you should keep the sawmill.'

'Now you can give it to Hellgum,' came from Ingmar.

He went on, stumbling over stones and roots.

Karin walked behind him, trying to persuade him. 'You must forgive me that I made a mistake for a moment, and thought you had been quarrelling with Hellgum. It was not so easy to think otherwise.'

'You had very little difficulty in thinking that your brother was a murderer,' Ingmar said, without turning round towards her.

He still went on. When the grass he had trodden upon raised itself, the blood dropped from it.

It was only now, when Karin heard Ingmar mention Hellgum's name in this manner, that it became clear to her how he hated him; and at the same time she realized how great a thing it was that Ingmar had done. 'Everyone will talk about what you have done to-day, Ingmar, and praise you for it,' she said. 'Surely you don't wish to die with all that honour coming upon you?'

She heard Ingmar laugh scornfully. He looked at her with a pale, wild face. 'Will you not go home, Karin? I know whom you would rather help.'

He staggered more and more, and there was now a continuous streak of blood on the ground where he had walked.

This streak of blood made Karin almost beside herself. The great love she had always felt towards Ingmar seemed to spring up with new strength, as if it gained nourishment from the red streak of blood. And now she was also proud of Ingmar; she thought he was a healthy shoot of the old and honourable tree.

'Ingmar,' said Karin, 'you are responsible both to God and man for risking your life in this way. You must know that, if I can do anything to make you wish to live, you have only to say it.'

Ingmar stood still. He grasped the stem of a tree in order to be able to stand. She heard him again laugh scornfully. Then he said: 'You will perhaps send Hellgum back to America?'

Karin stood looking at the pool of blood which gathered round Ingmar's left foot. She tried to collect her thoughts, in order to understand what it was Ingmar asked of her. It was something which meant that she should leave the beautiful garden of paradise in which she had lived the whole winter, and begin life afresh in that poor miserable world of sin she had left behind her.

Ingmar turned quite round. His face was a yellowish-white; the skin was tightened over his temples and over his nose like a dead person's. But his big under-lip projected in a more authoritative manner than ever before, and the strained expression round the mouth was very distinct. It was not likely that he would give up what he had demanded.

'I do not think that Hellgum and I can live together in this parish,' said Ingmar; 'but I can see that it is I who will have to make way for him.'

'No,' said Karin quickly; 'if I may only be allowed to nurse you back again to life, I promise you that I will see that Hellgum goes away.'

'God will surely find us another helper,' thought Karin whilst she was saying this; 'but, as far as I can see, there is nothing else to do but to let Ingmar have his way.'

Ingmar's wound was bound up and he was put to bed. The wound was not dangerous; it was only necessary for him to be kept quiet for a few days. He was lying in the room upstairs, and Karin sat at his bedside.

Ingmar was delirious the whole day. He lived over again all that had happened to him that day. It soon became clear to Karin that it was not only Hellgum and the saw-mill that had upset him.

In the evening his mind became clear and calm; then Karin said to him: 'There is someone who wants to speak to you.'

Ingmar answered that he was too tired to talk to anybody.

'Yes, but I think this will do you good.'

Directly afterwards Gertrud came into the room. She looked very solemn and much moved. Ingmar had always been fond of Gertrud, even in the days when she used to tease and make fun of him. But there had always been something within him which had risen against his love. A trying year full of longing and unrest had passed over Gertrud, and had changed her so much that Ingmar, as soon as he had seen her, had been filled with a great longing to win her.

When Gertrud came up to the bed, he covered his eyes with his hand. 'Will you not look at me?' said Gertrud.

Ingmar shook his head. Now it was he who was like a wilful child.

'You must please let me say two or three words to you,' said Gertrud.

'I suppose you have come to tell me that you have joined the Hellgumians?'

Gertrud knelt down by the bedside. She took Ingmar's hand away from his eyes. 'There is something you don't know, Ingmar.'

Ingmar looked inquiringly at her; he did not say anything.

Gertrud blushed and hesitated, and then she said: 'Last year, just when you left us, I had begun to love you in the right way.'

Ingmar grew quite red; a faint smile of happiness lighted up his face, but he immediately grew grave and distrustful again.

'I longed so much for you, Ingmar.'

Ingmar smiled doubtfully, but patted her hand gently as thanks for her wanting to be kind to him.

'And you never came once to see me,' she complained. 'It seemed as if I were no longer anything to you.'

'I did not want to see you again before I was well-to-do, and could propose to you,' said Ingmar, as if this were the most natural thing in the world.

'But I thought you had forgotten me.' Gertrud's eyes filled with tears. 'You don't know what a hard year it has been for me. Hellgum has been so good to me, and comforted me. He said my heart would be at rest if I gave myself up entirely to God.'

Ingmar looked at her with quite a new expression in his eyes. 'I was so frightened when you came to-day. I was afraid that I could not resist you, and that the struggle would begin afresh.' A radiant smile spread over Ingmar's face. But he remained silent.



' But this evening I heard, Ingmar, that you had helped the man whom you hated. And then I could not fight against it any more.' Gertrud grew crimson. ' I felt that it was impossible to do anything that would part me from you.' As she said this she bowed her head and kissed Ingmar's hand.

Ingmar seemed to hear great bells ringing, as if heralding the advent of a blessed and holy day. He was filled with peace and quietness. Love rested on his lips, sweet as honey, filling his whole being with a blissful solace.



## BOOK II



## CHAPTER I

### THE LOSS OF 'L'UNIVERS'

ONE misty summer night in the year 1880, two years before the schoolmaster built his mission-house and Hellgum came back from America, the great French liner *L'Univers* was making its way across the Atlantic, from New York and bound for Havre.

It was nearly four o'clock in the morning; all the passengers and most of the crew were asleep in their berths. The big deck was almost empty. That night an old French sailor lay in his hammock; he was restless and could not fall asleep. There was some sea on, and the ship's timbers creaked incessantly; but it was not this noise that prevented him from sleeping. He and his comrades slept in a large but very low compartment in the fore part of the vessel, which was partitioned off from the steerage passengers. It was lighted by a couple of lanterns, so that he could see the gray hammocks with the sleeping men, hanging in close rows, swinging to and fro. Now and again a gust of wind came through the hatches, so damp and cold that he seemed to see before him the immense ocean, rolling its grayish-green waves beneath the mist of the night.

There is nothing like the sea, thought the old sailor. As he lay there, everything suddenly became strangely quiet around him. He heard neither the working of the engines, nor the rattling noise of the rudder chains, nor the lapping of the waves, nor the whistling of the wind, nor anything. It seemed to him as if the ship had suddenly gone to the bottom, so that neither he nor his comrades would ever be wrapped in their shrouds nor laid in their coffins, but would have to go on lying, hanging in their gray hammocks, in the depths of the sea for all time.

Before he had dreaded the thought of finding his grave in the waves. Now it seemed to please him. He was glad that it was the moving transparent water that rested upon him, and not the

black, heavy, smothering earth of the churchyard. There is nothing like the sea, he thought again.

But then his mind began to busy itself with something that made him uneasy. He had not received the Last Sacrament, and it appeared to him that it would hurt his soul if it rested at the bottom of the sea without having received the Holy rite. It seemed to him as if his soul would never be able to find its way up to heaven.

At the same moment his eye discovered a faint light forward, where the compartment was narrower, and he raised himself and leant over the side of his hammock to see what it was. He soon saw that it was someone carrying two lighted candles. He bent forward still further to see who it could be. The hammocks hung so close together, and so near the floor, that anyone wanting to pass through the room without pushing against those who were sleeping was almost obliged to creep. The old seaman could not understand who could be coming this way with lighted candles. He soon saw who it was. It was two small acolytes in long black cassocks, each carrying a lighted taper.

The sailor was not at all surprised; he could quite understand that they would be able to walk under the hammocks, they were so small. 'I wonder if there is a priest with them,' he thought. At the same moment he saw that there was someone with them; but it was not a priest, it was an old woman, not very much bigger than the boys.

He thought he ought to know the old woman. 'It must be mother,' he said to himself. 'I have never seen anyone as small as she is. And no one but mother could walk so quietly under the hammocks without disturbing anyone.'

He saw that his mother wore over her black dress a long garment of thin white material, with a border of broad lace just like a priest's. In her hand she carried the large missal with the gold cross which he had seen a thousand times lying on the altar in the old church at home.

The small acolytes placed the candles at the side of his hammock, knelt down, and began each to swing his censer. The old sailor noticed the faint fragrance of the incense, saw the blue clouds rise in the air, and heard the tinkling of the chains of the censers. In the meantime his mother had opened the great book, and he knew that she was reading the Sacrament for the dead.

It seemed to him now to be good and peaceful to be lying dead at the bottom of the sea; it was much better than the

churchyard. He stretched himself in his hammock, and for a long time he continued to hear his mother's voice, mumbling Latin words. The incense enveloped him, and he heard the chains of the censers tinkle.

Then it all ceased. The acolytes took the tapers and walked in front of his mother, who closed the book with a bang and followed them. He saw them all three disappear beneath the hammocks.

The same moment they vanished the silence was at an end. He heard the breathing of his comrades. The timbers creaked, the wind whistled, and the waves splashed. It became clear to him that he was still amongst the living on the sea.

'Jesus! Maria! what is the meaning of this vision?' he asked himself. Ten minutes afterwards *L'Univers* was struck with tremendous force amidships. It seemed as if the ship had gone in two.

'This is what I expected,' thought the old sailor. During the terrible confusion which now ensued, whilst the other sailors, only half awake, jumped out of their hammocks, the old man deliberately put on his best clothes. He felt, as it were, a foretaste of death. It was gentle and mild. It seemed to him as if he already belonged to the bottom of the sea.

Although there was a fog, and the steamer at the time was off Newfoundland, where there are always many vessels about, she had gone at full speed. All at once she collided with an American sailing ship.

One of the first to be aroused was a little cabin-boy, who slept in the deck-house close to the dining-saloon. The little cabin-boy was half awakened by the shock, and he sat up in his hammock. Just over his head was a small round glass pane, through which he peeped. He saw nothing but fog, and a huge gray form which seemed to grow out of the mist. He thought he saw great wings; it must be some enormously big gray bird that in the darkness of the night had swooped down on the ship. The ship was now lying rolling and heeling over under its attack, whilst the great monster went at it with beak and claws and flapping wings.

The little cabin-boy thought he would die with fright. But the next moment he was quite awake, and saw that a great sailing ship was cutting into the steamer. He saw large sails and a strange deck, where men in long skin jackets rushed about in mad fear. The wind was freshening up, and all the innumerable sails were bulging under it. The masts swayed, and the yards and the

ropes snapped with a report that sounded like a shot. The great three-master had somehow got her bowsprit wedged into the side of *L'Univers*, and could not get free. The steamer heeled considerably, but its propellers went on revolving, so that she and the sailing vessel drifted along together.

'Dear me !' thought the little cabin-boy, as he rushed on to the deck, 'that poor ship has run against us, and now it will sink.'

It never for one moment occurred to him that the steamer was in danger, big and strong as it was. The officers now came rushing up ; but when they saw that it was only a sailing vessel that had collided with *L'Univers*, they were quite reassured, and began, with the greatest deliberation, to give their orders for getting the vessels clear of each other.

The little cabin-boy stood on the deck bare-legged and with his shirt fluttering in the wind, and he beckoned to the unfortunate men on the sailing vessel to come on to the steamer and save their lives. To begin with no one seemed to take any notice of him, but soon he saw a big man with a red beard making signs to him.

'Come over here, boy !' he shouted, running to the side of the vessel ; 'the steamer is going down.'

The little boy did not for a moment think of getting on to the sailing vessel. He shouted as hard as he could that they should come on to *L'Univers* and save themselves.

The men on board the sailing vessel tried with poles and boat-hooks to get away from the steamer, but the man with the red beard seemed to have eyes for no one but the little cabin-boy. He made a trumpet of his hands and roared again : 'Come over here ! come over here !'

The little fellow stood cold and wretched on the deck in his thin shirt. He again cried out to them to come on board. A big steamer like *L'Univers*, he thought, with six hundred passengers and a crew of two hundred men, could not possibly go down ; and, besides, he saw that both the captain and the sailors were just as calm as he was.

Suddenly the man with the red beard seized a boat-hook. He contrived to catch hold of the boy's shirt with it, and wanted to haul him on to the sailing ship. The boy was dragged quite up to the ship's railing, but there he managed to get himself loose. He would not allow himself to be dragged on to the strange vessel which was going to sink.

Directly afterwards a new, terrible crash was heard. It was the bowsprit of the sailing vessel that snapped, and now the two



ships got clear of each other. As the steamer went ahead the boy saw the big bowsprit hanging broken in the bows of the sailing vessel, and at the same time he saw clouds of sails tumbling down over the crew.

But the steamer proceeded on her way with full speed, and the strange ship was soon hidden by the fog. The last thing the boy saw was the men trying to get free of the sails. Then the sailing vessel vanished as if gliding behind a wall. 'They have already gone down,' thought the boy, and stood and listened, expecting to hear their cries for help.

Then a rough, powerful voice was heard shouting across to the steamer: 'Save your passengers! put out your boats!'

Again there was silence. Again the boy listened for cries for help. Then the voice was heard again, further off: 'Pray to God: you are lost.'

The same moment an old sailor came up to the captain. 'We have a big hole amidships; we are going down,' he said quietly and solemnly.

\* \* \* \* \*

A few minutes after the collision a little lady came on deck. She was completely dressed, her jacket was buttoned, and her bonnet-strings were tied. She came from one of the first class cabins very soon after the extent of the damage had been discovered. She was a little old lady with gray frizzy hair, and round eyes like an owl's, and a ruddy complexion.

During the short time the voyage had lasted she had managed to become acquainted with nearly everybody on board. They all knew that her name was Miss Hoggs, and she had told everybody, passengers and crew alike, that she was never afraid. She told them that she had travelled far and wide, for many years, and often been in danger; but afraid she had never been. She always told them she did not know what there was to be afraid of. She would in any case have to die once, and so what did it matter whether it was sooner or later? Nor was she afraid now; she had only hurried up on deck to see if anything interesting or exciting was going on.

The first thing she saw was two sailors rushing past her with wild, terrified faces. Stewards came running half-dressed on their way to tell the passengers to hurry on deck. An old sailor came laden with a whole pile of life-belts, which he threw down in a heap on the deck. A little cabin-boy in his shirt was sitting in a corner, sobbing, saying he was going to die. The captain was on

the bridge, and she could hear him give his orders, 'Stop her get the boats out!'

Stokers and engineers came rushing up the dirty steps leading down to the engine-room, shouting that the water had already reached the fires. She had hardly been on the deck a moment before it was crowded with people. They were the third and fourth class passengers who came rushing up in a body, shouting to each other that they must be quick and make for the boats; otherwise none but the first and second class passengers would be saved.

But when the confusion grew worse and worse, and Miss Hoggs saw that they were really in danger, she quietly betook herself to the upper deck above the dining-saloon, where there were several life-boats hanging in their davits over the side of the ship. There was not a soul there, and Miss Hoggs, without being noticed, climbed into one of the boats which hung suspended over the dark sea. As soon as she was seated inside the boat, she congratulated herself upon her superior wisdom. That was the benefit of having a clear and cool head. When the boat was lowered into the water there would be a general rush for it. There would be a terrible crush at the gangway. She congratulated herself over and over again that she had thought of getting into the boat beforehand.

Miss Hoggs' boat was far aft, but when she leant over the side she could just see the gangway. She could see that a boat had been manned and brought round to the gangway, and that people were beginning to get into it. But all at once there was a terrible cry: someone had slipped and fallen into the water. This must have frightened the passengers, for loud cries were heard all over the ship. People rushed towards the boat in wild confusion, thrusting aside everyone in their way and fighting to get to the gangway. In this terrible struggle many fell into the water. Some, who saw how impossible it was to get down the gangway, threw themselves into the sea in order to reach the boat by swimming. But then the boat rowed away. It was already so heavily laden that those in the boat took their knives in order to make those who were trying to get into it leave go.

Miss Hoggs saw the one boat after the other coming alongside. She saw the one boat after the other upset under the weight of all those who jumped into them.

The boats next to hers were lowered. But by some strange chance the boat in which she sat was left in its place. 'Thank God they are leaving my boat alone until the worst is over,' she thought.

And Miss Hoggs saw and heard terrible things. It seemed to her as if she were suspended over a hell. She could not see the deck itself, but it sounded as if a fight were taking place. She heard the report of revolvers, and saw light blue smoke ascending from the deck.

At last there came a moment when everything was quite silent. 'It is about time they lowered my boat into the water,' thought Miss Hoggs. She was not in the least afraid; she sat quiet and unconcerned until the steamer began to heel over. Then it began to dawn upon Miss Hoggs that her boat had been forgotten.

\* \* \* \* \*

On board the steamer was a young American lady, a Mrs. Gordon, who was on her way to Europe to visit her old parents, who for some years had been living in Paris. Her two children were with her. They were two little boys, and she and the children were asleep when the catastrophe happened. She at once awoke, hurriedly put some of the children's clothes on them, partially dressed herself, and went out into the narrow passage between the cabins.

The passage was full of people, who all came hurrying out in order to reach the deck. In the passage itself there was not so much difficulty in getting along. It was much worse on the stairway. There was a terrific crush; more than a hundred persons were struggling to get up. The young American lady stood still, with her little children beside her. She looked longingly up the stairway, wondering how she could possibly make her way with her little children. She saw how people pressed on and thrust others to one side, and thought of no one but themselves. No one took any notice of her.

Mrs. Gordon looked anxiously about, for she had her children to think of. She hoped to find some kind person whom she could ask to carry one of the boys, while she herself took the other. But she saw no one she could ask. Men came rushing up in the strangest attire; some were wrapped in blankets, others had taken their greatcoats over their nightshirts. She saw some of them had their sticks in their hands, and when she saw the look in their eyes she felt she would have to be on her guard against them.

For the women she was not afraid; but there was not one to whom she would like to entrust her child. They were all nearly out of their mind with fear; they would not have understood what she wanted. She stood watching them to see if there were not a single person who was calm. But when she looked at them,

she saw that some were eager to save the flowers that had been given to them on their departure from New York, others were shrieking and wringing their hands, and she felt it was of no use speaking to any of them. At last she tried to stop a young man who had been her neighbour at table, and who had been very attentive to her.

‘Oh, Mr. Martens——’

He looked at her with the same fixed evil expression that she saw in the eyes of the other men. He raised his stick a little, and had she tried to keep him back, he would have struck her.

Immediately afterwards she heard a howl; perhaps it was hardly a howl, but rather an angry wheeze, as when a strong and mighty storm cannot get out of a narrow passage. It came from the people on the stairway, who had been stopped from getting up.

A man was being carried up the stairs. He was a cripple, and could not walk. He was so helpless that his valet always had to carry him to and from the table. He was a big, heavy man, and his servant had with the greatest difficulty managed to carry him on his back halfway up the stairs. There he had stopped for a moment to take breath, but the people behind had so pressed forward that he had stumbled; and now he and his master completely stopped up the stairs, so that no one could get past.

Then Mrs. Gordon saw a big, powerful man bend down, lift up the cripple, and throw him over the railings of the staircase. But no one seemed to understand what had happened. No one thought of anything but of how to get up first. It was just as if someone had thrown a stone lying in the middle of the road into the ditch.

Mrs. Gordon saw that amongst such people there was no chance of being saved. She and her little children were lost.

\* \* \* \* \*

There was a young couple, husband and wife, who were on their wedding-trip. Their cabin was far aft, and they were sleeping so soundly that they had not heard anything of the collision. Nor was there much noise at that end of the ship afterwards. And as no one thought of calling them, they were still sleeping when all the others were already on deck and fighting for the boats.

But they awoke when the propeller, which the whole night had been working close to them, suddenly stopped. The husband hurriedly put on some things, and ran out to see what was the matter. He came back at once. He closed the cabin door securely before he said anything. Then he said: ‘The ship is sinking.’

When he had said this he sat down, and when his wife would have rushed out he asked her to remain with him.

'Most of the boats are already away,' he said. 'Most of the passengers are drowned, and those who are still on board are fighting desperately for the last boats.' He had seen a woman trampled to death on the stairway; he had heard cries of death on all sides. 'There is no possibility of rescue,' he said. 'Do not stir; let us die together.'

She thought he was right, and sat obediently down beside him.

'You would not like to see all those people fighting,' he said. 'We must die; let us die a peaceful death.'

She did not think it was too much to stay with him for the few short moments of life that still remained to them. She had meant to give him a whole long life.

'I thought,' she said, 'that, when we had been married for many years, you would sit by me when I lay on my death-bed, and I should have thanked you for a long happy life.'

At the same moment she saw a small streak of water making its way under the cabin door. This was too much for her. She stretched out her arms in despair. 'I cannot!' she cried; 'let me go! I cannot sit here waiting for death. I love you, but I cannot.'

She rushed out just as the ship began to heel over before it went down.

\* \* \* \* \*

Young Mrs. Gordon was lying in the water. The steamer had gone down; her children were drowned; she herself had been deep, deep under the sea. Now she had again risen to the surface, but she knew that in another moment she would sink again, and then it was death.

Then she thought neither of husband nor of children, nor of anything belonging to this world. She thought only of giving up her soul to God. And her soul rose like a liberated prisoner. She felt how glad it was to throw off the heavy chains of human life; she felt how jubilantly it prepared to ascend to its real home. 'Is it so easy to die?' she thought.

Whilst she was thus thinking, she heard all the confused noises around her—the surging of the waves, the rushing of the wind, the cries of anguish from the drowning, and the noise of the different objects floating on the water clashing together; she felt as if all this formed itself into words, which she could understand, in the same way as shapeless clouds sometimes gather themselves into a picture. And what she heard said to her: 'It is true that it is easy to die; that which is difficult is to live.'

'Yes, so it is,' she thought, and she went on thinking what was needed to make life as easy as death.

Around the shipwrecked people fought and struggled for the last planks and the last boats. In the midst of the wild cries and curses she heard a strong voice shout: 'Do not fight. He who fights shall perish. Be united, united, united!'

Whilst the voice was still sounding in her ears she was rescued. She was drawn up into a little boat in which there were only three people: an old sailor in his Sunday clothes, a little woman with round eyes like an owl, and a little boy sobbing, who had nothing else on but a torn shirt.

\* \* \* \* \*

The next day, in the afternoon, a Norwegian ship came sailing along the great banks and fishing-grounds of Newfoundland. The weather was beautiful and calm, the sea was almost like a mirror, and the ship was only moving very slowly. They had set every sail in order to catch the last breath of the dying wind.

The sea was wonderfully beautiful, a light, shining blue, and, where the faint wind passed over it, white like silver.

After the stillness of the approaching evening had lasted for a while, the crew saw a dark object floating in the water. When they came a little nearer they saw it was a corpse. The ship went right past it, and they could see from the clothes that it was the body of a sailor. He was lying on his back, with a peaceful face and open eyes. He had not been long enough in the water for his features to change. He looked as if he allowed himself to be rocked on the water with complacency.

But when the sailors looked to the other side they uttered a cry of surprise, for, without their having noticed it, a second corpse appeared quite close to their bows. It looked as if they were going to sail right over it, when at the last moment it was washed away from their course. They all rushed to the side of the ship, and looked down on the sea. This time it was a child, a daintily-dressed little girl, wearing a little blue hood and coat. 'Dear me!' said the sailors, drying their eyes, 'dear me! what a little one!'

The child drifted past them. It looked up at them with an old-fashioned, serious expression, as if it were about some important business. Immediately afterwards one of the men shouted that he saw another body, and from the other side came a similar cry. All at once they saw five corpses, they saw ten, and then there were so many they could not count them.

The ship glided slowly on between all these dead; they flocked

around it as if wanting something. Some came floating in large clusters; they looked like drifting timber or other objects which had been torn away from the shore, but they were only dead bodies.

The sailors stood staring; no one dared to move. They could hardly believe that what they saw was real. They thought they saw an island—it looked like land as they approached; but it was nothing but dead bodies floating close together, and surrounding the vessel on all sides. The skipper turned the rudder in order to catch the wind, but it did not help much. The sails were limp, and the dead still followed them.

The sailors grew paler and more silent. The ship had so little way on her that she could not get clear of the dead; and they were afraid lest it should go on like this the whole night. Then a Swedish sailor stood up in the bows and said the Lord's Prayer in a loud voice. Then he began to sing a hymn. Whilst he was still singing the sun went down, and the evening breeze carried the ship away from the region of the dead.

## CHAPTER II

### HELLGUM'S LETTER

AN old woman came out of a little hut in the forest. Although it was only a week-day she was dressed in her best clothes, as if she were going to church. She took the key out of the lock and laid it in its usual place under the doorstep.

When the old woman had gone a few steps, she turned round to look at her little hut, which stood small and poor beneath the huge snow-covered fir-trees. She looked back at her poor home with much affection. 'Many a happy day have I spent there!' she said solemnly to herself. 'Ah me! the Lord giveth, and the Lord taketh away.'

Then she wandered down the forest path. She was very old and fragile, but she was one of those who hold themselves straight and erect, however much old age tries to bend them. She had a nice face and soft white hair. She looked so gentle that it was quite strange to hear her speak with a voice that was sharp, solemn, and slow.

She had a long walk before her, for she was going down to one of the meetings of the Hellgumians at Ingmars' Farm. Old Eva Gunnarsdotter was one of those who believed most fervently in Hellgum's teaching. 'Oh,' she thought, as she walked along, 'that was a blessed time, in the beginning, when half the parish joined Hellgum. Who would have thought that so many would have gone astray, and that after five years there are scarcely more than a score of us left, unless, indeed, one counts the children!'

Her thoughts wandered back to the time when she, who had for many years been living lonely and forgotten in her little hut, all at once had gained a number of brothers and sisters who came to her in her loneliness, who never forgot when the snow had fallen, deep and heavy, to clear the way up to her hut, and fill her little shed with dry, well-cut firewood, without her knowing



anything about it. She thought of the time when Karin Ingmarsdotter and her sisters, and many more of the well-to-do people in the parish, came and held love-feasts in her poor little house.

'Alas that so many should have neglected the time of their visitation !' she thought. 'Now our punishment will come upon us. Next summer we shall all perish, because so few have obeyed the call, and because those who have obeyed it have not continued steadfast in the faith.'

The old woman then began to ponder over Hellgum's letters, those letters which the Hellgumians looked upon as Gospel, and read aloud at their meetings, just as other communities read the Bible. 'There was a time when he was as milk and honey to them,' she said to herself. 'He advised us to show long-suffering towards those yet unconverted, and to show gentleness towards those who had fallen away. He taught the rich to show mercy towards the just and the unjust. But lately he has been as worm-wood and gall. He writes about nothing but trials and punishments.'

The old woman had now left the forest behind her, and stood looking down upon the village. It was a beautiful day in February. The snow spread its white purity over the whole country. All vegetation had sunk into its winter sleep, and there was not a breath of wind. But as the old woman walked along she thought that the whole country, which was now wrapped in sleep, would soon awake only to be consumed by fire and brimstone ; in her mind's eye she saw everything that was now covered with snow enveloped in flames. 'He has not said it in so many words,' said old Eva, 'but he writes incessantly about a sore trial. Oh dear ! oh dear ! who can wonder if this parish should be visited as Sodom, and overthrown as Babylon ?'

As Eva Gunnarsdotter wandered through the village, she could not look at a single house without seeing in the spirit how the coming earthquake would shake it, so that it tumbled into dust and ashes. And when she met people she thought of how monsters from hell would persecute and devour them.

'Here comes the schoolmaster's Gertrud,' she thought, as she met a pretty young girl on the road. 'Her eyes beam and sparkle like the sun on the snow. She is so happy now, because in the autumn she is going to marry young Ingmar Ingmarsson. She has a bundle of thread under her arm, I see ; she is evidently going to weave hangings and sheets for her new home. But before that weaving is done desolation will have overtaken us.'

The old woman cast gloomy looks about her on her way

through the village, which had grown and developed into a place of astonishing size and importance. But all these white and yellow houses, with their covering of boards and their high windows, would be overthrown just the same as her poor hut, where the windows were only like loopholes and where the moss grew between the beams.

In the middle of the village she stopped, and struck her stick hard against the ground. A sudden feeling of anger came over her. 'Yes, yes!' she cried, in such a loud voice that people stood still and looked round. 'Yes, yes! in all these houses people are living who have refused the Gospel of Christ, and have accepted the gospel of the devil. Why did they not listen to the call? Why did they not turn away from their sins? That is why we shall all perish. God's hand strikes heavily. God's hand strikes both the just and the unjust with the same punishment.'

When the old woman had crossed the river, she was overtaken by some of the other Hellgumians. It was old Corporal Fält and Kulas Gunnar and his wife, Brita Ingmarsdotter. Shortly afterwards she was also joined by Hök Matts Erikson and his son Gabriel, and Gunhild, the daughter of the Chairman of the Parish Council.

It was both a pretty and a cheerful sight when these men and women, in the many-coloured dress of the district, walked along the snow-covered road. But in the eyes of Eva Gunnarsdotter they were only like prisoners being led to the scaffold, like cattle being driven to the slaughter-house.

All the Hellgumians looked sad and depressed. They looked on the ground as they walked, as if weighed down by a burden of bitter despondency. They had all expected that the bliss of heaven would at once have come down upon earth, that they would have lived to see the day when the New Jerusalem descended from the clouds of heaven. When they had become so few, and could not hide from themselves that their hopes had failed, something seemed to have broken within them. They walked slowly and with dragging steps; they often sighed, and had nothing to say to each other. For this had been a matter of great earnest to them. They had staked their life upon it, and had lost.

'Why are they so downcast?' thought the old woman. 'They do not believe the worst; they will not understand the meaning of Hellgum's letters. I have expounded his words to them, but they will not listen to what I say. Alas! those who live on the plain, beneath the open sky, never learn to have either fears or

misgivings. They have not the wisdom of those who sit alone in the darkness of the forest.'

She guessed that the Hellgumians were uneasy because Halvor had called them together on a week-day. They were afraid that he had to tell them of a new desertion. They looked anxiously at each other, scrutinizing each other with distrustful glances, that seemed to ask: 'How long wilt thou remain steadfast in the faith—how long wilt thou?'

'Would it not be better to end the whole thing, to disband the brotherhood at once?' she thought. 'It is better to die a sudden death than to slowly waste away.'

Alas! this community, this Gospel of peace, this blessed life of unity and brotherhood, which they had loved so well—that this should now be doomed!

Whilst these distressed men and women continued their walk, the sun, as mighty and glorious as ever, continued its course across the high blue sky. A fresh coolness rose from the snow, awakening courage and cheerfulness, and from the fir-covered hills a soothing peace and stillness fell upon the country.

At last they reached Ingmars' Farm and entered the best room.

In the best room of Ingmars' Farm hung high up on the wall an old picture, which more than a hundred years ago had been painted by a village artist. It represented a great city surrounded by high walls. Above the walls one could see the roofs and gables of many houses. Some of these houses were red peasant houses, the roofs of which were covered with green turf; others were like manor-houses, with white walls and slate roofs; and others, again, had substantial towers with copper spires, like the Kristina Church at Falun.

Outside the walls gentlemen in knee-breeches and shoes, and with gold-headed canes in their hands, were walking, and a coach was seen driving out of the gateway of the town, filled with ladies with powdered hair and Watteau hats. Below the walls trees were growing with thick dark-green foliage, and through the high waving grass in the fields one could see a sparkling brooklet.

Under the picture was written in large ornamental printed letters: 'This is God's Holy City, Jerusalem.'

This old picture was hung so high up that scarcely ever anyone saw it. Very few of the people who visited Ingmars' Farm knew of its being there.

But to-day a wreath of green cranberry branches was hung round the picture, so that it at once attracted the attention of those who entered the room. Eva Gunnarsdotter at once

noticed it, and she thought: 'I see they know now at Ingmars' Farm that we are doomed; that is why they want us to keep the heavenly Jerusalem before our eyes.'

Karin and Halvor came forward to meet her, looking as gloomy and downcast as all the others. 'Yes, they know the end is near,' she thought.

Eva Gunnarsdotter, who was the oldest person present, was taken to the head of the table, and on the table in front of her lay a letter with American stamps on it.'

'Another letter has come from our dear brother Hellgum,' said Halvor. 'It is for this that I have called our brothers and sisters together.'

'Halvor thinks, then, that it is an important message,' said Kulas Gunnar.

'Yes,' said Halvor. 'Now we shall hear what Hellgum meant when he wrote in his last letter that a great trial was before us.'

'I do not think that any of us will be afraid of what we may have to suffer for the Lord's sake,' said Kulas Gunnar.

Several of the Hellgumians had not yet arrived, and they had to wait some time. Old Eva Gunnarsdotter sat looking at Hellgum's letter with her long-sighted eyes. She thought of the letter with the seven seals in the Revelation of St. John. It seemed to her that if any human hand touched this letter the Angel of Destruction would come upon them.

She looked up at the picture of Jerusalem. 'Yes,' she murmured, 'I shall assuredly see the city, with its gates of pearl and with its walls of pure gold.' And she went on murmuring to herself: "'And the foundations of the wall of the city were garnished with all manner of precious stones. The first foundation was jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, a chalcedony; the fourth, an emerald; the fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolyte; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, a topaz; the tenth, chrysoprasus; the eleventh, a jacinth; the twelfth, an amethyst.'"

The old woman was so engrossed with her dear book of the Revelation that she started up as if she had been asleep when Halvor Halvorsson walked up to the table where the letter was lying.

'We will begin by singing a hymn,' said Halvor. 'I think we should sing hymn No. 244.'

And the Hellgumians stood up and began to sing 'Jerusalem beloved.'

Eva Gunnarsdotter gave a sigh of relief that the terrible moment

was put off for a little. 'Dear me! that such an old woman as I should be so afraid to die!' she thought, quite ashamed of herself.

When the hymn was finished, Halvor took the letter, opened it, and straightened it out.

The same moment the Spirit came upon Eva Gunnarsdotter. She stood up, and began to pray that grace might be given them to receive in a proper spirit the message which the letter contained. Halvor stood still with the letter in his hand, and waited until she had finished. Then he began to read the letter in the same voice he would have used if reading a sermon :

'DEAR BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

'The peace of God be with you. Hitherto I have thought that I and you who have accepted my teaching were alone in the world in this our belief. But, God be praised! here in Chicago we have found brethren of the same mind, who walk and live according to the same principles.

'Be it known to you that here in Chicago lived in the beginning of the eighties a man of the name of Edward Gordon. He and his wife were God-fearing people, and grieved bitterly over all the want there was in the world, and prayed to God that grace might be given to them to help their fellow-men.

'Then it happened that the wife of Edward Gordon had to make a long voyage across the sea, and she suffered shipwreck, and was cast into the waves. But when she was in the uttermost peril the voice of God spoke to her. And the voice of God commanded her that she should teach her fellow-men to live in peace and unity, and cease from strife.

'And the woman was saved from the sea and the peril of death, and returned to her husband and announced the message from God. Then he said: "This is a great command that the Lord our God hath given us, that we should live in unity, and we will obey it. So great is this command that there is but one spot on the surface of the earth which is worthy of receiving it. Let us therefore gather our friends together and set out with them for Jerusalem, and proclaim God's holy command from Mount Zion."

'Then Edward Gordon and his wife, and thirty others, who wished to obey God's last holy commandment, set out for Jerusalem.

'There they lived in peace and concord in the same house. They shared with each other all their worldly goods, served each other, and watched over each other.

'And they took the children of the poor to their home, and

nursed the sick. They succoured the aged, and aided all those who were in need, without asking for reward or gifts.

'But they preached neither in the churches nor in the market-place, for they said, "It is our life which shall speak for us."

'But people who heard of their mode of living said: "These people must be fools and madmen."

'And those who cried out the loudest against them were the Christians who had gone to Palestine to convert the Jews and Mohammedans by teaching and preaching. They said: "What manner of men are these? they do not preach. Verily, they have come hither to lead an evil life, and to indulge in sin and lust among the heathen." And they raised a cry against them which was heard across the ocean even unto their own country.

'But amongst those who had gone to Jerusalem was one who was a widow. She lived there with her two half-grown-up children, and she was very rich. She had left a brother in America, and people now began to say to him: "How can you permit your sister and her children to live amongst these people who lead an evil life? They are nothing but idlers that live upon her wealth."

'And the brother summoned his sister to appear before the court, in order to compel her at any rate to let her children be educated in America.

'And on account of these proceedings the widow and her children and Edward Gordon and his wife went back to Chicago. But they had then lived in Jerusalem fourteen years.

'When they came back from that distant land, accounts of them appeared in all the papers, and some called them lunatics, and some called them impostors.'

When Halvor had read so far, he paused, and then repeated the whole story in his own words, that everyone might understand it. Then he continued:

'But there is in Chicago a house of which you have heard; and in that house dwell people who endeavour to serve God in righteousness, and who share everything with each other, and watch over each other's life.

'We who dwell in this house read in a paper about these lunatics who had come back from Jerusalem, and we looked at each other, and said: "These people have the same faith as we have. They have joined together so that they might lead a righteous life. We will see these people who hold our faith."

'And we wrote to them that they should come and visit us. And those who had come back from Jerusalem obeyed our summons; and we compared our faith with theirs, and said: "We think and believe the same things; it is by the grace of God that we have found each other."

'They told us about the glory of the city of God, the city which lies shining on its white mountain, and we considered them happy because they had been permitted to walk along the roads which the foot of Jesus had trod.

'Then one of our people said: "Why should we not go back with you to Jerusalem?"

'They answered: "You shall not accompany us thither, for God's Holy City is full of strife and discord, of need and sickness, of sin and poverty."

'And immediately another of our people cried: "Perhaps God has brought you to us that we should accompany you thither and fight against all this."

'Then we all of us heard God's voice in our hearts: "Yes, this is My will!"

'We asked them if they would admit us into their community, although we were poor and unlearned. And they answered that they would.

'Then we determined that we would become brothers and sisters, and share everything; and they accepted our faith, and we theirs, and the whole time the Spirit was upon us and there was great joy. And we said: "Now we know that God loves us, inasmuch as He is sending us to the same land whither He sent His own Son. And we know that our teaching is the right teaching, inasmuch as it is God's will that it shall be made known from His holy mountain Zion."

'But then one of those who belonged to us said: "And our brothers at home in Sweden?" And we said to the people from Jerusalem: "There are more of us than you see before you here. We have brothers and sisters living at home in Sweden. And they have been sorely tried, and many of them have fallen away; and they fight a hard fight for righteousness' sake, because they are living amongst sinners."

'Then the people from Jerusalem answered: "Let your brothers and sisters from Sweden follow after us to Jerusalem, and share in our holy work."

'And at first we were glad at the thought that you would follow us, and lead a life in unity and joy together with us in Jerusalem. But afterwards we were filled with doubt, and said:

"Our brethren will never leave their big farms, and their good fields, and their accustomed occupation."

'But the people from Jerusalem answered: "We have no fields and no big farms to offer them; but we can show them the paths that Jesus trod, so that they can also walk in them."

'Still we were in doubt, and we said: "Verily, our brothers and sisters will never go to a foreign land where no one understands their mother-tongue."

'The people from Jerusalem answered: "They shall learn to understand what the stones in the Holy Land say to them about their Saviour."

'We said: "They will never divide their property amongst strangers and become poor as beggars. They will never give up their influence and position, for they are the foremost men and women in their own town."

'The people from Jerusalem answered: "We have no influence and no worldly goods to offer them, but we can offer them a share in the sufferings of their Saviour, Jesus Christ."

'When we heard that, we were again filled with a great joy, and thought that you would come. But now I tell you, dear brothers and sisters: "Do not speak with each other when you have read this, but be still and listen; and what the voice of God bids you do, that do!"'

Halvor folded up the letter, and said: 'Now we will do as Hellgum writes. We will be still and listen.'

There was a long silence in the best room at Ingmars' Farm.

Old Eva Gunnarsdotter sat silent like the others, waiting for the voice of God to speak to her. She understood it all in her own way. 'Hellgum wants us to go to Jerusalem so that we may escape the great destruction. The Lord will preserve us from the flood of brimstone and save us from the rain of fire; and the just amongst us will hear the voice of God bidding them to flee.'

The old woman never for a moment thought that it would be a sacrifice for any of them to leave home, and the land that their forefathers had possessed before them, when it was a question of anything like this. It never struck her that anyone could be in doubt as to whether he should leave the green forests of his home, the smiling river, and the rich fields. Some of the others thought with a feeling of fear of having to alter entirely their way of living, of leaving the old home, their parents, kinsfolk, and friends—but not she. To her it meant that God would save them, as He, in



times gone by, had saved Noah and Lot. Were they not called to a life of supernatural glory in God's Holy City? It was to her as if Hellgum had written that they should go up to heaven in this life.

They all sat with closed eyes, entirely lost in thought. Several of them were so sorely tried in their mind that a cold sweat broke out on their brows. 'This is verily the trial which Hellgum foretold,' they thought.

The sun was setting fast, and sent its sharp rays into the room; it shed its red glare over the many pale faces. At last Ljung Björn's wife, Brita Ingmarsdotter, rose from her seat and fell on her knees. And after her first the one and then the other, until they were all kneeling.

All at once several of them drew a deep breath, and a smile lightened up their faces.

Then Karin Ingmarsdotter said with a trembling wonder in her voice: 'I hear the voice of God calling me.'

Gunhild, the daughter of the Chairman of the Parish Council, lifted up her hands in ecstasy, whilst the tears ran down her cheeks. 'I, too, shall go,' she cried; 'God's voice calls me.'

Then Krister Larsson and his wife Kerstin said almost at the same moment: 'It cries into my ear, that I shall set out. I hear the voice of God calling me.'

The call came to the one after the other, and at the same moment all care and fear left them. A great joy came upon them. They had nearly all heard the call, but as yet it had not come to Tims Halvor Halvorsson. He strove hard in prayer, and he was greatly troubled, and thought: 'God will not call me as He has called the others. He sees that I love my fields and my meadows more than His word. I am not worthy.'

Karin Ingmarsdotter went up to Halvor and laid her hand upon his forehead. 'You shall be silent, Halvor, and quietly wait for the voice of God.'

Halvor folded his hard hand so beseechingly that one could hear how the joints crackled. 'Perhaps God does not reckon me worthy to go with you,' he said.

'Yes, Halvor, you shall assuredly go with us, but you shall be silent.' She fell on her knees beside him, and placed her arms around him. 'Listen in silence, Halvor, and without fear.'

A few moments afterwards the troubled expression on his face passed away. 'I hear—I hear something far away.'

'It is the harps of the angels preceding the voice of God,' said his wife. 'Be quite still, Halvor.' She drew nearer and

nearer to him, as she had never before done in the presence of others.

'Oh,' he said, clasping his hands together, 'now I have heard it. It spoke to me so loudly that it roared in my ears: "Thou shalt set out for My Holy City Jerusalem!"'

'Have we now all heard it?'

'Yes, yes,' they cried, 'we have all heard it!'

But now old Eva Gunnarsdotter began to moan. 'I have not heard anything; I must not go with you. I am like Lot's wife, who was left behind. I shall remain standing like a pillar of salt.'

She wept in great fear and anguish, and the Hellgumians gathered round her in prayer. But yet she heard nothing, and her sorrow became exceeding great. 'I can hear nothing, nothing,' she said, 'but you *must* take me with you. You *must* not leave me behind. You must not leave me to perish in fire and brimstone!'

'You shall wait, Eva,' said the Hellgumians. 'The call can still come to you. It will assuredly come to you in the night, or in the morning.'

'You do not answer me,' said the old woman. 'You do not answer my question. You will perhaps not take me with you, if I do not hear the call?'

'You will hear it—you will!' cried the Hellgumians.

'You do not answer me,' cried the old woman in her despair.

'Dear Eva,' said the Hellgumians, 'we cannot take you with us if God does not call you. But do not be afraid; the call will assuredly also come to you.'

Then the old woman passionately arose from her kneeling position, straightened her old back, and struck her stick hard against the ground. 'I see, you will go and leave me to perish,' she said. 'Yes, yes, yes! you will go and leave me to perish.' She had become terribly angry, and once more Eva Gunnarsdotter was seen as she had been in her youth, strong and passionate and fiery. 'I will never again have anything more to do with you,' she cried. 'I will not be saved by you. Fie upon you! You will forsake wife and children, and father and mother, in order to save yourselves. Fie! You are out of your minds to leave your good farms. You are deceived and led astray, and run after false prophets. It is upon you that fire and brimstone will rain; it is you who shall perish. But we who remain at home—we shall live!'

## CHAPTER III

### THE GREAT BEAM

ON the same beautiful spring day, just before dusk, two young people stood talking together on the road. The young man was coming from the forest with a beam so big that the horse could hardly pull it. But all the same the horse had to go a roundabout way, so that the beam could be taken through the village and past the white school-house.

Outside the school the horse was pulled up, and a young girl at once came out of the house to inspect the great beam. And she could not sufficiently admire it—how long it was and how thick, and how straight it was, and what a beautiful light-brown bark it had, and how beautifully firm and faultless the timber was !

The young man told her with great seriousness that it had grown on a sandy plain a long way to the north of Olof's Peak. He told her when he had felled it, and how long it had been lying in the forest to dry. He explained to her with great exactness how many inches it was in circumference at the bottom and how many at the top.

The young girl had seen hundreds and hundreds of beams being floated down the river and dragged along the roads, but this one beam seemed to be more remarkable than all the rest of them put together.

'But, Ingmar,' she said, 'it is only the first !'

She thought with concern that it had taken Ingmar five years to get the first beam towards building their new home. But Ingmar thought that all difficulties had now been overcome.

'Just you wait a little, Gertrud,' he said. 'If I can only get the timber down whilst the roads are hard, the house shall soon be ready.'

It began to be bitterly cold as the night came on, and the horse stood shivering, shaking its head, and stamping its hoofs ; its mane was white from the hoar-frost. But the young people

assuredly did not feel the cold. They stood by the roadside and built the whole of their house, from cellar to attic. And when they had built the house they began to furnish it.

'We will put the sofa against the long wall,' said Ingmar.

'But we have not got any sofa,' Gertrud replied.

Ingmar bit his lips. He had not intended to tell her at present that he had ordered a sofa, and that it was already in hand; but now he had let out the secret.

Then it was Gertrud's turn to confess that she had kept something from him during these five years. She told him that she had made hair up into ornaments, and woven ribbons, and sold them, and for the money she had bought all sorts of things for the house—pots and pans, plates and dishes, sheets and tablecloths, quilts and blankets.

Ingmar was delighted with all these treasures. But when they were in the midst of counting up their riches he suddenly stopped. He had been looking at Gertrud, and became all at once silent from astonishment that such a wonderfully pretty girl as Gertrud should belong to him.

'What are you thinking about?' asked Gertrud.

'I was thinking that the best of it all is, that I shall have you.'

The young girl did not say anything, but laid her hand caressingly on the great beam that was to form part of the wall of that house where Ingmar and she would have their home. She knew that happiness and security awaited her, for the man she was going to marry was good and wise, noble and faithful.

At that moment they saw an old woman hurrying past in the gathering darkness. She went quickly, and was talking to herself in much agitation.

'Yes, yes, yes!' said the old woman, 'their happiness shall last no longer than from dawn to sunset. When trials come, their faith shall fail like a rope made of moss, and their life shall be a long darkness.'

'Surely she cannot mean us,' said the young girl.

'No. How could that apply to us?' said the young man.

## CHAPTER IV

### INGMARS' FARM

THE next day was a Saturday. The Pastor was out driving late in the evening, and there was a heavy snowstorm. He had been visiting a sick person who lived far north in the big forest, and he had much trouble in making his way home. The horse sank deep into the snowdrifts; the sledge was time after time on the point of being upset. Both the Pastor and his man often had to get out to tread down the snow. It was not particularly dark; the moon came gliding from behind the snowclouds, big and round, lighting up the wintry landscape. When the Pastor looked up, he could see the snowflakes flying and whirling about, filling the air with small white spots.

It was not equally difficult for them to get along in all places. There were parts of the road where the whirling snow had not drifted. The sledge went easily enough on the smooth road. In other places the snow was high, but loose and even, and there it was not difficult, either. The worst was where the wind had blown the snow together in drifts, that were so high that one could not see above them. Then they had to leave the road and try and find their way across fields and hedges, at the risk of being upset in a ditch or having the horse spiked on a railing.

Both the Pastor and his man spoke with much apprehension of the large drift which regularly, every time there was a snowstorm, was blown against a high boarding quite close to Ingmars' Farm. 'If we can only get past that we are as good as home,' they said.

The Pastor thought of how often he had asked Great Ingmar to remove the high boarding that always caused the snow to drift on that spot. But it had never been done. Whatever changes might have taken place at Ingmars' Farm, so much was certain, that that boarding had been allowed to remain.

They could soon see the farm, and they found the snowdrift there as usual, as high as a wall and as hard as a stone. There

was no possibility of driving to one side ; they were bound to go right over it. It looked so impossible that the man asked whether he should not go up to the farm and ask for assistance. But the Pastor would not allow him to do so. He had not exchanged a word with Karin and Halvor for more than five years. He was not more pleased than people generally are at the thought of meeting old friends with whom one is no longer on friendly terms.

So up the drift the horse had to go. It held until the horse was at the top. Then it suddenly sank in. The horse disappeared as if into a grave, and the Pastor and his man sat gazing down into the hole. At the same moment that the horse sank into the drift one of the traces snapped, and they could not drive any further.

A minute or two later the Pastor opened the door of the best room at Ingmars' Farm. There was a big pile of wood ablaze on the hearth. At one side of the chimney the housewife sat spinning fine carded wool ; behind her sat the maids in a long row spinning flax and hards. The other side of the chimney belonged to the men. They had just come in from driving home timber ; some were resting, others had some light work in hand. They were splitting up wood, mending the rakes, or making handles for axes.

When the Pastor entered and told them of the accident he had had, they all bestirred themselves. The men went out in order to free the horse. Halvor took the Pastor to the table and asked him to sit down on the long seat. Karin sent the maids into the kitchen to make coffee and prepare supper for her visitor. She herself hung up the Pastor's fur coat to dry before the fire, lighted the hanging-lamp, and brought her spinning-wheel up to the table so that she could join in the conversation.

'I could not have been received any better if Great Ingmar had been alive,' thought the Pastor.

Halvor began quietly to talk about the state of the roads, and then asked the Pastor if he had got a good price for his corn, and if those repairs had been done which he had wanted for some time. Karin asked after the Pastor's wife, and if there had not been some improvement in her health recently.

The Pastor's man now came in and reported that the horse had been dug out and the traces mended, and that they were ready to start. But Karin and Halvor pressed the Pastor to remain to supper, and would take no refusal. The coffee was brought in ; the largest silver jug was on the tray, the sugar-basin was the old silver one that was hardly used even at weddings and funerals, and there were three dishes full of fine cake. The Pastor's small,

round eyes grew big with astonishment. He stroked his forehead with his hand time after time; he sat as in a dream, and as if he were afraid of being awakened.

Halvor showed the Pastor the skin of an elk which had been shot on his land last autumn. The skin was spread out upon the floor; the Pastor had never seen a finer or a more beautiful skin. Karin went up to Halvor and whispered something to him. Halvor at once asked the Pastor to accept the skin as a gift.

Karin went backwards and forwards, and took heavy old silver out of the blue-painted cupboards. On the table she spread a cloth with a broad hemstitch, and took out so many silver spoons that it looked as if she were laying the table for a feast. She poured milk and beer into huge silver jugs.

When they had finished supper, the Pastor wanted to leave. Halvor Halvorsson himself and two of his men went with him. They shovelled a roadway for him through the drifts, supported the sledge when it was in danger of being upset, and did not leave him until he had reached home.

The Pastor stood safe on his own steps. He thought how good it was to find old friends again, and bid Halvor a hearty good-bye. Halvor stood feeling for something in his pocket.

At last he pulled out a piece of folded paper. Might he be allowed to give it to the Pastor there and then? It was an announcement which he would like to have made public after service in the morning. Perhaps the Pastor would take it now, so that he need not send a messenger with it to the church.

When the Pastor came into his study, he lighted his lamp, opened the paper, and read:

'On account of the owner going to Jerusalem, Ingmars' Farm is for sale.'

The Pastor read no further. He was lost in wonder and deep thought. 'Now it has come upon us,' he murmured, as if speaking of a storm. 'This is what I have been waiting for these many years.'

## CHAPTER V

### HÖK MATTS ERIKSSON

It was a beautiful day in the spring. A farmer and his son were on their way to the large ironworks which are situated on the southern outskirts of the parish.

The farmer lived on the north side of the parish, and in consequence they had to walk through almost the whole of the parish. They walked past all the newly-sown fields, where the corn had just begun to show itself. They saw all the green rye-fields, all the beautiful meadows where the clover would soon bring fragrance and colour.

They also walked past several houses, where people were painting and putting in new windows. They went past gardens where digging and planting were going on. All the people they met had shoes covered with clay and hands black with earth, because either they had come from the fields or the gardens, and had been planting potatoes and cabbages or sowing turnips and carrots.

The farmer could not help stopping and asking what kind of potatoes they were planting, or how long it was since they had sown their oats. As soon as he saw a calf or a foal, he began to speculate as to how old it could be. He calculated how many cows they were likely to keep at that farm, and wondered how much that colt would fetch when it was properly broken in.

His son tried time after time to distract his attention from all these things. 'I am thinking that you and I will soon be wandering through the valley of Sharon and the deserts of Judea,' he said.

The father smiled, and his face lighted up for a moment. 'It will be beautiful to walk in the footsteps of our dear Lord Jesus,' he said. But directly afterwards his thoughts were taken up by two cartloads of lime which came driving towards them. 'Who do you think, Gabriel, can be fetching lime? They say that lime



makes a splendid crop. It will be worth while noticing the difference at harvest-time.'

'At harvest-time, father——' began the son reproachfully.

'Yes, I know,' said the farmer: 'at harvest-time I shall be dwelling in the tents of Jacob and labouring in the Lord's vineyard.'

'Yes,' said the son, 'thus it shall be. Amen, amen.'

Then they walked in silence for awhile, looking at the coming spring.

The water trickled in the ditches, and the road itself was soft from the spring rains. In whatever direction one looked there was work waiting to be done. Everyone had a feeling of wanting to help, even although they might be walking on a field that did not belong to them.

'Ay, ay,' said the farmer thoughtfully, 'I can't deny that I wish I had sold my farm in the autumn when the work was over; it is hard having to leave it in the spring, just at a time when one ought to put one's shoulder to the wheel in earnest.'

The son shrugged his shoulders a little; he could see that he would be obliged to let the old man talk.

'It is just thirty-one years since I, when quite a young fellow, bought a poor piece of land close to the northern boundary of the parish,' said the farmer. 'The land had never seen a spade. Half of it was bog, and the other half covered with stones; it looked terrible. On that land I have dug up stones until I thought my back would break. But, all the same, I think it was harder work with the bog before I got it drained and cultivated.'

'Yes, there is no doubt you have worked hard, father,' said the son. 'This is why God cares for you, and calls you to His Holy Land.'

'At first,' continued the farmer, 'I lived in a house no better than a charcoal-burner's hut; it was made of rough planks, and the roof was nothing but earth. I could never make it watertight; the rain always came in. But it was worst at night, and the cow and the horse were no better off than I. The whole of the first winter they spent in a cave in the hillside, which was as dark as a cellar.'

'How can you cling to a place, father, where you have suffered so many hardships?' said his son.

'But just think what a pleasure it was,' answered the father, 'when I was able to build proper stables for the beasts, and when year by year my live-stock increased so much that I was always having to find more room for them. If I were not going to sell

the farm now, I should have put a new roof on the barn. I should have done it now, when I had just finished sowing.'

'Father,' said his son, 'you will also have to sow in the new land, and some will fall amongst thorns, and some on stony ground, and some by the wayside, and some on good ground.'

'And the old house,' said the father, 'which I built after the hut, I was thinking of pulling down this year, and building a large dwelling-house. What is the use now of all that timber that you and I brought home this winter? It was hard work getting it home—hard work both for the horses and ourselves.'

His son began to be a little anxious. It seemed to him as if his father was slipping away from him. He was afraid that his father was not going to give up his property to God in the right spirit. 'But,' said the son, 'what are new houses and stables compared with living a pure life amongst brethren of the same mind?'

'Alleluia!' answered his father. 'I know that a beautiful life is in store for us. And I am now on my way to the works to sell the property to the company. When I come back it is all over; then I shall have nothing I can call my own.'

His son said nothing; he felt more comforted by hearing his father say this.

Shortly afterwards they passed a farm prettily situated on the top of a hill. The dwelling-house was whitewashed, and had a balcony and veranda, and round the house were tall poplars with pretty grayish-white stems.

'Look!' said the farmer. 'It was just like that I meant to have it—a veranda just like that, with a balcony and plenty of trellis-work. And just such a green lawn in front, with fine, soft grass. Would it not have been nice, Gabriel?'

The son made no answer, and the farmer could see that he was tired of hearing about the farm. He in his turn was now silent, but his thoughts were still busy with the old home. He wondered how his horses would fare with their new owner—how things would go altogether. 'Oh,' he thought, 'I am afraid it was foolish of me to sell the farm to a company. They will do nothing but cut down the trees, and leave the farm to take care of itself, and everything will go to wreck and ruin.'

They had now reached the works, and there his interest was again aroused. He saw ploughs and harrows of a new pattern, and he remembered that for some time he had been thinking of buying a reaper. He looked at Gabriel, who was a good-looking young fellow, and pictured him sitting on a smart red-

painted reaper, cracking his whip over the horses, and cutting down the thick grass, like a warrior mowing down his enemies.

When he went into the office he fancied he could hear the clicking noise of the reaper. He could hear the grass fall and the shrill chirping of frightened birds. The agreement was lying waiting for them in the office. The negotiations were concluded, the price had been agreed upon, and all that was needed to complete the sale was his signature to the papers.

The agreement was read aloud to him, and he sat listening attentively to it. He heard that there were so many acres of forest and so many acres of arable land and meadow, so much household furniture, so many head of cattle, which he had to hand over. His face grew hard.

‘No,’ he said to himself, ‘I will not do it.’

When they had finished reading the agreement to him, he was on the point of saying that he could not, when his son bent over him, and whispered :

‘Father, you must choose between me and the farm. Whatever you do, I shall go.’

The farmer had been so taken up with the thought of his farm that it had never struck him that his son could leave him. Oh, Gabriel would go in any case ! He could not quite make it out. He would not have gone if his son had remained at home. But, of course, if his son meant to go, he must go, too.

He went up to the desk where the agreement was lying ready for his signature. The manager himself handed him the pen, and pointed to the place.

‘Here,’ he said, ‘write “Hök Matts Eriksson.”’

He took the pen, and at the same moment he distinctly remembered how thirty-one years ago he had signed an agreement about the purchase of a small piece of barren land. He remembered that after he had signed his name he went out to look at his new purchase—how the thought had come to him : ‘See what God has given you. Here you have work for the rest of your life.’

The manager thought he hesitated because he did not know where he should put his name, and again pointed to the place.

‘This is where you must write your name, “Hök Matts Erikson.”’

He began to write. ‘This,’ he thought, ‘I write for the sake of my faith and my salvation ; for the sake of my dear friends, the Hellgumians ; for the sake of living in unity with them, and not being left alone when they all go away.’

And he wrote his first name.

'This,' he went on thinking, 'I write for my son Gabriel's sake in order not to lose such a good and loving son, for the memory of the many times he has been good to his old father, to show him that he is the dearest of all I have.'

And then he wrote his second name.

'But this,' he thought, when he put his pen to the paper to write the third name — 'why do I write this?' At the same moment his hand involuntarily began to make thick lines up and down the hateful paper. 'This I do because I am an old man, who must till the ground, must plough and sow, in the same place where I have worked and toiled all my life.'

Hök Matts Erikson looked very uncomfortable when he turned round to the manager and showed him the paper.

'The manager must forgive me. It *was* my intention to part with my farm, but I find I cannot.'

## CHAPTER VI

### THE AUCTION

IN May the great auction at Ingmars' Farm took place. What a lovely day it was! almost as warm as summer. All the men had discarded their heavy white sheepskin coats, and only wore their short jackets, and the women were already wearing the large white puffed sleeves which belonged to their summer dress.

The schoolmaster's wife got ready to go to the auction: Gertrud did not want to go, and her husband was busy with his school. When Mother Storm was ready, she opened the door to the school-room a little and nodded good-bye to her husband. He was telling the children about the destruction of the great city of Nineveh, and on that account his face wore such a severe look that the poor children were quite afraid.

On her way to Ingmars' Farm Mother Storm stopped whenever she saw a hawthorn in bloom or a cluster of sweetly-smelling lilies of the valley.

'Can one see anything more beautiful, even if one does go as far as Jerusalem?' she thought.

Mother Storm, like many others, had begun to love the old parish much more than before, on account of the Hellgumians comparing it to Sodom, and being about to leave it. She plucked a few of the small flowers that grew by the roadside, and looked at them almost tenderly. 'If we were as wicked as they say,' she thought, 'it would be an easy matter for God to destroy us. He need only let the cold continue, and the earth remain covered with snow. But when our Lord allows the spring and the flowers to return to us, He must in any case think that we deserve to live.'

When Mother Storm reached Ingmars' Farm she stopped and looked troubled. 'I think I will go back. I cannot bear to see the old home broken up.'

But she was far too curious to find out what was going to be done with the farm, to do so.

As soon as it was announced that the farm was to be sold, Ingmar had tried to buy it. But he only possessed about six thousand kroner, and Halvor had been offered twenty-five thousand by the large company that owned Bergsana Saw-mills.

Ingmar had succeeded in borrowing enough money to be able to offer Halvor the same price, but the company had then increased their bid to thirty thousand, and Ingmar dared not take upon himself such a heavy debt.

The worst of it was, that not only would the farm in this way pass out of the possession of the Ingmar family for all time—for the company never parted with anything they had once got hold of—but they would in all probability not allow Ingmar to rent the saw-mill at the Langfossen, and in that case he would have nothing to live upon. Not only would he be unable to marry Gertrud in the autumn, as he had hoped, but he might be obliged to go away in order to find something to do.

'Before night I shall know how all this will end,' thought Mother Stina. 'But I only hope Karin Ingmarsdotter will not come up and speak to me; for if she does, I can't refrain from telling her what I think about the way in which they have treated Ingmar. And in a way it is her fault that he does not already own the farm. They say that they want such a frightful amount of money for the journey; but I can't understand, all the same, that Karin can have the heart to sell the farm to a company who will only cut down the timber and neglect the farm.'

There was someone else beside the company who wanted to buy the farm; it was the rich County Judge, Sven Persson. It was on him Mother Stina relied, for Sven Persson was a generous man, and would be sure not to refuse Ingmar renting the saw-mill.

'Sven Persson will not forget that he was once a poor shepherd lad on this very farm,' she thought, 'and that it was Great Ingmar who first took an interest in him and helped him on.'

Mother Stina did not go into the house, but remained in the farmyard, as did most of the others who had come to the sale. She sat down on a pile of boards, and looked about her as one does when for the last time one is looking at a place one is fond of.

Three sides of the farmyard were surrounded by buildings, and in the middle of it was a small storehouse on poles. The buildings did not look particularly old, with the exception of a carved porch at the entrance to the dwelling-house, and another, still older, with heavy twisted pillars, in front of the entrance to the brewing-room.

Mother Stina thought of all the old Ingmarssons whose foot

steps had worn the pavement. She felt as if she could see them coming home from work in the evening, and going into the best room, and up to the large fireplace, tall and rather stooping, always afraid of pushing themselves forward or of taking a higher place than was due to them.

She thought of how hard-working and honourable they had always been, and she could not understand what would become of the parish without the Ingmarssons. 'It ought not to be allowed,' she said. 'The King ought to be told about it.' Mother Stina felt it more bitterly than if it had been a question of her own home.

The auction had not yet commenced, but a good many people had already come. Some went to look at the cows; others were standing in the farmyard, examining all the carts and ploughs and spades and axes which had been brought out there. And as soon as Mother Stina saw a couple of peasant women coming out of the cowshed, she thought: 'Just look at Mother Inga and Mother Kerstin! Of course, they have been in to choose a cow. They will go about boasting that they have got a cow of the old breed from Ingmars' Farm.'

Shortly afterwards she saw Bakkehus-Nils standing turning over the ploughs.

'Bakkehus-Nils will think himself a big man when he uses a plough that Great Ingmar himself has ploughed with,' she murmured to herself.

By degrees there gathered more and more people round the farm implements. They looked with wonder at some of the things, which were so old that no one knew for what they had been used. What amused them most were the old sledges. Some of them were very ancient; they were marvellously painted in red and green, and the harness that belonged to them was ornamented with many-coloured tassels and white shells.

Again Mother Stina thought she could see the old Ingmars driving sedately in these old sledges. She saw them driving out to some feast or other, or bringing home a bride in the sledge. 'Many good people are leaving the parish now,' she thought. For Mother Stina had a feeling as if all these old Ingmars had been living at the farm to that very day, when their belongings were going to be spread about to the four winds.

'I wonder where Ingmar is, and how he feels,' she thought. 'When it hurts me so much to see all this, what must he feel?'

The weather was so unusually fine that the auctioneer suggested that everything that was to be sold should be taken into the farm-

yard, so that the crush of so many people in the rooms could be avoided. Men and maid servants therefore brought out chests and boxes that were painted with tulips and roses ; some of these had been standing in the lumber-room undisturbed for a hundred years or more. They brought out silver jugs and old-fashioned copper kettles, spinning-wheels and carders, and all kinds of quaint weaving appliances.

The peasant women gathered eagerly round all these treasures, took them up and examined them.

Mother Stina had not intended buying anything, but she remembered that there was supposed to be a loom here on which one could weave the finest diaper, and she went up to try and find it. But just as Mother Stina was going, one of the maids came out with two huge old Bibles.

They were so heavy with their leather binding and brass mountings that she could hardly carry them both.

Mother Stina was as overcome as if someone had given her a slap in the face, and she went back to her old seat. She could quite understand that there was no one now to read in the old Bibles, with their antiquated language, but it was strange that Karin would sell them.

It was, perhaps, the very Bible the housewife had been reading when they came and told her that her husband had been killed by the bear, Mother Stina thought.

Mother Stina recalled to mind all that she had heard about the old Ingmarssons. She felt as if everything she saw had something to tell her.

The old silver buckle which lay on the table had been taken from the trolls in the Klack Mountain by an Ingmar Ingmarsson.

In that old-fashioned carriage the Ingmar Ingmarsson who had lived in her childhood had always driven to church. And every time he had driven past her and her mother on their way to church, her mother used to say to her : ' You must curtsy, Stina ; here comes Ingmar Ingmarsson.'

She used to be surprised that her mother always reminded her to curtsy for Ingmar Ingmarsson ; she had never been so particular about the magistrate or the County Judge.

At last she found out that it was because her mother, when she was a little girl and was going to church with *her* mother, had always been told : ' Now you must curtsy ; here comes Ingmar Ingmarsson.'

' God knows,' sighed Mother Stina, ' it is not only because I had expected that Gertrud would some day have been mistress



here that I am so grieved to see all this. I feel as if it were all over with the parish now.'

At that moment the Pastor came driving up. He looked very grave; he got out of his carriage and walked straight up to the dwelling-house, and Mother Stina guessed that he had come to plead Ingmar's cause with Karin and Halvor.

Shortly afterwards the manager of Bergsana Saw-mills arrived. He came to represent the company. Berger Sven Persson, the County Judge, drove up at the same time. The manager went straight into the house, but Sven Persson first had a look at the things in the farmyard. When he went past a little old man with a long beard, who was sitting on the same boards as Mother Stina, he stopped.

'Do you know, Strong Ingmar, if Ingmar Ingmarsson has made up his mind to buy the timber I offered him?' asked the justice.

'He says no,' answered the old man; 'but I should almost fancy that he is beginning to waver.' At the same time the old man winked at Sven Persson, and pointed to Mother Stina, so that he might be careful of what he said.

'I think he ought to be very pleased with such an offer,' said Sven Persson. 'It is not every day I make such an offer. I only do it for Great Ingmar's sake.'

'It is a good offer, that's certain,' said the old man; 'but he says that he is already negotiating in other directions.'

'He cannot have rightly considered what he is refusing,' said Sven Persson, and went slowly up to the house.

Mother Stina had not yet seen any of the Ingmar family, but presently she discovered Ingmar. He stood leaning against the wall quite motionless, and with his eyes almost closed.

She got up in order to go to him, but when she had gone a little way she bethought herself and went back to her seat.

Ingmar was deadly pale, and everyone saw that he was suffering so keenly that no one ventured to go and speak to him.

Ingmar stood so quietly that many had not even noticed that he was there. But those who had could think of nothing else. There was none of that merriment which usually prevails at an auction; those who saw his sufferings were so impressed that they neither felt inclined to laugh nor chaff each other.

At last the sale began. The auctioneer stood up on a chair and offered the first lot, an old plough. Ingmar stood as motionless as if he had been a stone pillar and not a human being.

'Dear me! why doesn't he go away?' thought Mother Stina. 'There is no necessity for him to stop here and watch this

miserable business. But the Ingmarssons never do as other people.'

Then the hammer fell for the first time, and Mother Stina saw Ingmar start as if it had struck him. Then he again stood as motionless as before, but at every ring of the hammer a shudder went through him.

Just then two peasant women went past Mother Stina ; they were talking about Ingmar.

'Just think : he need only have proposed to the daughter of some rich farmer, and then he would have had money enough to buy the farm ; but he is going to marry the schoolmaster's Gertrud, you know,' said one of them.

'They say that there is a rich man who has promised him Ingmars' Farm as a dowry if he will marry his daughter,' said the other. 'They don't mind his being poor, because he belongs to such a good old family.'

'Yes, it helps one in everything to be a son of Great Ingmar.'

'Yes, it would indeed have been a good thing if Gertrud had had a little, so that she could have helped Ingmar,' thought Mother Stina.

When all the implements had been sold, the auctioneer removed to the other side of the farmyard. There he began to sell all the home-woven towels and curtains, and he held them up so that the embroidered tulips and the many-coloured borders could be seen all over the yard.

Ingmar must have noticed this, for he involuntarily looked up. Mother Stina saw for a moment his dull, weary eyes taking in the desolation of the surrounding scene—then he looked down again.

'I never saw anything like it,' said a young peasant girl. 'He looks as if he were going to die. I wish he would go away and not torture himself.'

Mother Stina felt as if she must get up and cry out that this could not go on, that they must stop it ; but she forced herself to keep quiet. 'I must remember that I am nobody, and can do nothing,' she thought.

All at once there was such a silence that Mother Stina looked up. She saw that it was because Karin Ingmarsdotter had come out of the house. It was easy to see what they all thought of Karin and her doings, for as she went across the yard everybody drew back, not one put out his hand to greet her, but they all stood silent, and looked indignantly at her.

Karin looked tired and worn, and she stooped more than usual. Two red spots burned on her cheeks, and she looked

just as unhappy as she did when she had so much trouble with Elias.

Karin had come out to ask Mother Stina to go into the house. 'I have only just found out that Mother Stina was here,' she said.

Mother Stina made several excuses, but Karin made her give in by saying: 'We should so much like all old differences to be forgotten now that we are going away.'

Whilst they were going across the yard, Mother Stina tried to say: 'It must be a hard day for Karin Ingmarsdotter.'

Karin sighed, but did not answer.

'I can't understand how Karin has the heart to sell all these old things.'

'It is what one loves the most that one must first and foremost sacrifice to the Lord,' said Karin.

'People think it looks so strange.'

'Our Lord no doubt would also think it strange if we kept back anything that has been given to Him.'

Mother Stina bit her lips, and could not bring herself to say more. All the reproaches she had meant to heap upon Karin came to nothing. There was such a dignity over Karin that no one had the courage to blame her.

In the best room no great change had taken place on account of the auction, as the tables and seats along the walls were fixtures. But the copper vessels no longer adorned the walls, the bedsteads had been robbed of the bedclothes and hangings, and the blue-painted doors of the cupboards, that in olden days were often left half open to let visitors see the massive silver jugs and beakers that filled the shelves, were now closed, as a sign that they contained nothing worth looking at.

The best room was full of guests, relations of Karin and Halvor, and other Helligumians. One by one they were, with much ceremony, led up to a large well-spread table and asked to sit down.

The door to the little room was closed. There they were negotiating about the sale of the farm itself. One could hear loud, eager voices, especially the Pastor's.

But in the best room people were very quiet, and when anyone spoke it was in a low whisper. Everyone's thoughts were in the little room where the fate of the farm was being decided.

Mother Stina turned to Gabriel Mattsson, and asked him: 'I suppose there is no chance of Ingmar keeping the farm?'

'No, they have got far beyond his offer by this time,' answered

Gabriel. 'They say the innkeeper at Karlsund has offered thirty-two thousand, and the company has gone as far as thirty-five thousand. The Pastor is now trying to persuade them to sell to the innkeeper rather than to the company.'

'But what about Berger Sven Persson?' asked Mother Stina.

'They say that he has not made any bid to-day.'

They could hear the Pastor still eagerly talking. They could not catch the words, but they knew that nothing could have been decided as long as he went on talking.

There was a moment's silence, and then they heard the innkeeper saying, not exactly loudly, but with such emphasis that it was impossible not to understand every word: 'I bid thirty-six thousand, not because I think the farm is worth it, but because I don't want it to go to the company.'

Immediately afterwards it sounded as if someone struck the table with his fist, and they heard the company's manager shout in a loud voice: 'I bid forty thousand, and I don't think Karin and Halvor will get a higher bid.'

Mother Stina grew very pale, and again went out into the farmyard. She could not stand sitting in the close room any longer and hearing all this.

There the sale of the linen was over, and the auctioneer again changed his place. He began to offer the old silver for sale—the big silver jugs, inlaid with old golden coins, and the beakers, with inscriptions from the seventeenth century.

When the auctioneer called out the first silver jug, Ingmar made a step forward, as if to prevent the sale. But he stopped at once, and again returned to his former place.

A minute or two afterwards an old man came up to Ingmar with a silver jug in his hand. He modestly laid it down at Ingmar's feet, and said: 'You shall have this in memory of all that ought to have been yours.'

Again Ingmar's whole body shook; his lips trembled, and he tried to say something.

'You need not say anything now, that can wait until another time,' said the old peasant. He went a step or two, but then suddenly turned back. 'I have heard that you have it in your power to take over the farm if you only will. It would be the greatest service you could render our parish.'

There were at Ingmars' Farm several old people who had served there their whole life, and in their old age still went on living there. They were even more distressed than other people, for they were afraid they would be turned out of their old home

if the company bought the farm. Whatever happened, they were quite sure that under a new master things would never be as they had been. These poor old souls wandered about the farmyard all day long, frail and helpless, and it was sad to see the anxious, frightened expression in their poor, watery old eyes.

At last an old man, who was nearly a hundred, took it into his head to go up to Ingmar and sit down on the ground by him. It seemed to be the only place where he could find rest, for here he remained sitting, supporting his shaky old hands on his stick.

As soon as Old Lisa and Brew Märta saw where Korp Bengt had gone, they, too, went and sat down beside Ingmar. They did not say anything, but they must have had some vague notion that he could protect them—he who was now Ingmar Ingmarsson.

From the time these old people came up to him Ingmar no longer kept his eyes closed, but stood looking down upon them. It was as if he counted up all the years and all the sorrows that had passed over their heads whilst they had served his family. And he must have thought that it was his first duty to see that they might be allowed to die in their old nest. He looked about the farmyard until he discovered Strong Ingmar. Then he nodded to him meaningly.

Without saying a word, Strong Ingmar went across to the dwelling-house, and walked through the best room into the little room. He remained standing at the door waiting for an opportune moment to deliver his message.

When Strong Ingmar came in the Pastor stood in the middle of the room, talking to Karin and Halvor, who sat as stiff and motionless as two stone figures. The manager from the saw-mill sat at the table looking very confident; he knew quite well that he was able to outbid all the others. The innkeeper from Karlsund stood at the window; he was much agitated. The perspiration stood on his forehead, and his hands shook. Berger Sven Persson sat on a sofa in the farthest corner of the room; his big, authoritative face was quite impassive. He sat with his hands folded in his lap, and appeared not to be thinking about anything else but as to how quickly he could twirl his thumbs round each other.

The Pastor had now finished talking. Halvor looked across at Karin as if to ask her advice; but she sat immovable, looking down.

‘Karin and I are obliged to consider that we are going to a foreign land,’ said Halvor, ‘and that both we and our brethren

will have to live on the money we get for the farm. We have been told that the journey alone to Jerusalem will cost fifteen thousand kroner, and afterwards we shall have to get a house and food and clothing. I do not think we can afford to give anything away.'

'Is it not unreasonable to expect Karin and Halvor to sell the farm at such a price, simply to prevent it from becoming the property of a limited company?' said the manager. 'I think you should accept my offer without any further delay, if for no other reason than to put an end to all this talk.'

'Yes,' said Karin, 'I think we ought to take the highest bid.'

But the Pastor was not so easily beaten. As soon as it was a question of the things of this world, he knew quite well how to choose his words. He was a totally different man now to what he was in the pulpit.

'Karin and Halvor, I am sure, have so much regard for the old farm that they would rather sell it to someone who would keep it in good condition, even if they had to take a couple of thousand kroner less,' he said.

And then he began to tell them—more especially for Karin's benefit—about several farms that had been ruined after they had come into the possession of limited companies.

Karin looked up once or twice whilst he was speaking, and the Pastor saw that he had at last made some impression on her. 'I suppose there is still something left in her of the old farmer's daughter,' he thought, and he went on talking about underfed cows and tumble-down, uninhabited homesteads.

At last he wound up with these words: 'I know quite well that, if the company has made up its mind to buy Ingmars' Farm, it will go on outbidding the farmers, until they are obliged to stop. But if Karin and Halvor have any desire to keep this old property from becoming ruined under a limited company, they must now state a fixed price, so that the farmers know what they have to go by.'

Halvor looked uneasily at Karin when the Pastor had finished speaking.

Karin slowly raised her eyelids and answered: 'I think both Halvor and I would rather that the farm was sold to someone of our own class, so that we could rest assured that everything would go on as it has done before.'

'If anyone else instead of the company would give us forty thousand kroner for the farm, then Karin and I would be content with that,' said Halvor.

As soon as Halvor had said this, Berger Sven Persson looked up and fixed his eyes on Strong Ingmar. The old man went straight up and whispered something into his ear.

Berger immediately arose and went up to Halvor. 'If Halvor is content with forty thousand kroner, I offer that sum,' he said.

Halvor's face twitched a little. It looked as if he swallowed something before he answered. 'I beg to thank the County Judge,' he said, giving him his hand. 'I am pleased that I can give the farm into such good hands.'

Sven Persson also shook hands with Karin. She was much moved, and was obliged to dry the tears away. 'Karin may be sure that everything will remain just as it used to be,' he said.

Karin asked him if he intended to remove to the farm himself.

'No,' he said with much solemnity. 'My youngest daughter is to be married in the autumn, and she and her husband will have the farm.'

The justice then turned to the Pastor and thanked him. 'It has now been arranged as the Pastor wished it to be,' he said. 'I never thought, in the days when I lived here as a poor shepherd-boy, that it would one day be in my power to bring about that there should again be an Ingmar Ingmarsson on Ingmars' Farm.'

They all looked surprised, and the Pastor gave vent to an exclamation of astonishment.

Karin went quickly out of the room. She hurried across the farmyard, and almost ran up to Ingmar. 'I must congratulate you, Ingmar,' she said, and her voice trembled. 'We have been strongly opposed to each other lately, but, as God will not grant me the happiness of your joining us, this is the best news that I could hear.'

Whilst Karin was speaking, Ingmar remained just as immovable as he had been the whole day.

All the men who had been in the little room now came up to Ingmar and congratulated him. 'Good luck to you, Ingmar Ingmarsson of Ingmars' Farm!' they said.

For the first time a look of pleasure passed over Ingmar's face. He murmured softly to himself: 'Ingmar Ingmarsson of Ingmars' Farm.' But the next moment he again stood as silent and gloomy as he had been the whole day.

The news spread all over the farmyard in a moment. People questioned and answered loudly and eagerly. Some were so glad that the tears came into their eyes. No one cared to listen to the auctioneer, but everyone crowded round Ingmar to congratulate

him, both the fine folks and the peasants, both strangers and acquaintances.

When Ingmar stood surrounded by all these glad people, he raised his eyes, and saw Mother Stina, who stood a little way off and looked at him. She was very pale, and looked old and poor. When their eyes met she turned away and went towards home.

Ingmar hastily left the others, and rushed after her. He bent over her and said in a hoarse voice, whilst his face worked with grief: 'Go home to Gertrud, Mother Stina, and tell her that I have forsaken her, and sold myself in order to get the farm. Tell her never to waste another thought upon such a poor creature as I.'



## CHAPTER VII

### GERTRUD

SOMETHING strange had taken possession of Gertrud—something which she could neither control nor overcome ; something which grew and increased, and threatened to take the upper hand altogether.

It began as soon as she heard that Ingmar had forsaken her. It was a great fear lest she should see Ingmar, lest she should suddenly meet him on the highroad or in church. She did not know herself why this thought should be so terrible to her, but she always felt that she could not possibly bear to meet Ingmar.

Gertrud wished she could have locked herself in day and night, so as to make sure of not meeting him, but this was impossible for a poor girl like herself. She had to go and work in the garden, she was obliged several times a day to walk the long way to the field to milk the cows, and she was often sent to the village shop to buy sugar and flour and whatever was needed in the house.

When Gertrud walked on the road, she drew her head-kerchief far down over her face, never took her eyes from the ground, and always hurried along as if haunted by a ghost. Whenever it was possible she avoided the highroad, and stole along the byways, or ran along the sides of the ditches and drains, where she thought it would be impossible to meet Ingmar.

But afraid she always was. There was not a single place where he might not come. If she rowed on the river, he might be there floating his timber down, or if she went far into the forest, she might meet him going to his work, with his axe over his shoulder.

When she was in the garden weeding she looked up every moment, so that if she saw him coming along the road she could get away in time. She felt with bitterness that he was far too well known in the house. Her dog would not bark if he came, and her pigeons that strutted about the gravel walk would never fly up with noisy beating wings when he approached.

Gertrud's fears did not grow less, but, rather, increased day by day. All her sorrow had turned into fear, and her power of resisting it grew less and less. 'The day will soon come when I shall not dare to go outside the door,' she thought. 'I shall be getting quite peculiar and afraid of people, if I don't go quite out of my mind. Oh, God, take this fear away from me!' she prayed. 'I can see father and mother think I am on the point of going out of my mind. Oh, Lord, help me!'

When Gertrud's fear was at its height, she had one night a strange dream. She thought that one day at noon she was going out with her milkpail to milk the cows. The cows were grazing in a closed-in field a long way from home, quite close to the forest. She went along all the narrow byways, along the sides of the ditches and drains. She felt as if she could only walk with difficulty; she was so tired and weak that she could hardly lift her feet. 'What can be the matter with me? Why have I such difficulty in walking?' she asked in her dream. And she answered herself: 'You are tired because you carry about with you this heavy sorrow.'

At last she thought she had reached the place where the cows were, but when she came to the enclosure she could see nothing of the cows. She grew very frightened, and looked for them amongst the bushes, and at the stream, and under the birches.

Whilst she was looking for them, she discovered that there was an opening in the hedge on the side nearest the big forest. She was terribly unhappy, and stood wringing her hands. 'I am so tired,' she said, 'and I shall have to run all over the forest trying to find the cows.'

However, she began to wander about the forest, slowly making her way between the stiff branches of the fir-trees and the prickly juniper bushes.

But she soon came to an even and easy road, without knowing how she had got there. The road was a little slippery, from all the brown fir-needles which covered it. The fir-trees stood erect and towering on both sides of it, and the sunbeams played on the whitish-yellow moss under the trees. It was so beautiful and so easy to walk there that her fear grew less.

All at once, as she went along, she saw an old humpbacked woman stealing her way between the trees. It was old Finne-Marit, the old woman who was a witch. 'It is dreadful that that horrid old woman is still alive, and that I shall have to meet her alone here in the forest,' thought Gertrud. She tried to slip past her in the shade, so that the old woman should not notice her.

But Finne-Marit looked up just as she was trying to get past. 'I say,' the old woman called after her: 'wait a bit, and I will show you something.' Finne-Marit knelt down in front of her on the road. She drew a circle with her finger in the fir-needles, and in the middle of the ring she placed a flat brazen vessel.

'Now she is going to do some witchcraft,' thought Gertrud, 'so it must be true that she is a witch.'

'Look into the vessel, and maybe you will see something,' said the old Finn woman. Gertrud looked down and started; she saw Ingmar Ingmarsson's face quite distinctly mirrored in the bottom of the vessel. The old Finn woman gave her a long needle. 'Look here,' she said: 'take this and stick it in his eye. He deserves it, because he has deceived you.' Gertrud hesitated a little, but she felt a strange desire to do as the old woman told her. 'Why should he be rich and happy, and have a good time of it, whilst you are miserable and unhappy?' said the old woman. Gertrud felt irresistibly tempted to do as Finne-Marit bade her. She lowered the needle. 'Mind you prick him right in the middle of the eye,' said the witch. Gertrud did so. Twice she stuck the needle right into Ingmar's eye. But as she stuck the needle in, it seemed to her that it went far down, as if it had stuck, not in the brazen vessel, but in something soft, and when she drew it out it was covered with blood.

As soon as Gertrud saw the blood on the needle, she felt as if she had really pierced Ingmar's eye. She was so frightened that she gave a loud scream and awoke.

She lay a long time convulsed by violent sobs before she could convince herself that it was only a dream. 'God preserve me from ever wishing to revenge myself upon him,' she prayed.

She had hardly become quiet and again fallen asleep, before the same dream began afresh. She was again wandering along the narrow pathways on her way to milk the cows. Again they had disappeared, and again she went into the forest to look for them. She came to the same beautiful road, and saw the sunbeams playing on the moss. She remembered everything that had just happened to her in her dream. She walked along, afraid of meeting Finne-Marit, and was glad that she did not see her.

But suddenly she thought she saw the earth open between two trees. First a head appeared through the opening, and then quite a little man worked his way out of the earth. He hummed and mumbled the whole time with his lips, and from that time she knew who it was. Of course it was Humming Peter, who was not quite right. Sometimes he lived down in the village, but during

the summer he preferred to live in the forest in a cave in the earth.

It all at once occurred to Gertrud that people said of Peter that, if anyone wanted to do somebody an injury without being found out, he could do it for them. He was suspected of having several times set fire to houses, at the instigation of others.

Gertrud, in her dream, went up to the man and asked him, half in fun, if he would set fire to Ingmars' Farm. She would like him to, she said, because Ingmar was more fond of the farm than of her. In her dream she thought it was very amusing that she should have asked this half-crazy fellow to do this.

To her horror, it seemed as if the man had quite understood what she meant. He at once began to run towards the village. She hurried after him, but it was not possible for her to overtake him. The fir-branches held her back, her feet sank into the boggy ground, and she stumbled on the slippery rocks. At last she reached the border of the forest, but the flames were then already visible between the trees. 'He has done it—he has set fire to the farm!' she cried, awakening from the terror of her dream.

Gertrud sat up in bed; the tears ran down her cheeks. She dare not lie down, for fear she should begin to dream again. 'God help me! oh, God help me!' she said. 'I do not know how much wickedness there is in me. But God knows that I have never for a single moment during all this time thought of revenging myself upon Ingmar. Oh, God, keep this sin away from me! Grief is dangerous!' she exclaimed, wringing her hands—'grief is dangerous!'

She did not clearly understand herself what she meant by these words; but she felt that her poor heart was like a garden that had lost all its roses and lilies. Now grief, like a gardener, went about planting thistles and poisonous herbs in it.

All that morning Gertrud felt as if she went about dreaming. She was not really awake. Her dream had been so distinct and lifelike that she could not forget it. As often as she thought of the joy with which she had pierced Ingmar's eyes, she said to herself: 'It is awful that I have become so wicked and revengeful. I do not know what to do to get away from all this. I am on the way to become a lost soul.'

At dinner-time Gertrud went out as usual to milk the cows. She drew her head-kerchief over her face, as she always did now, and did not raise her eyes from the ground. She went along the narrow pathways just as she had done in her dream. She could

se that they were the same flowers that grew by the roadside, and she was in such a strange half-awake state that she could hardly tell what she really saw from what she saw in her imagination.

When Gertrud reached the enclosure she could see nothing of the cows. She began to look for them as she had done in her dream. She looked for them at the stream, under the birch-trees, and amongst the bushes. She could not find them anywhere, and yet she had a feeling that they were there all the same, and that she would no doubt be able to find them, were she only quite awake.

She soon found an opening in the hedge, and guessed at once that the cows must have got through there.

Gertrud now went in search of them. She followed the track of the cows in the soft earth of the forest, and discovered that they had gone on to the road leading to a distant Säter. 'Ah!' she exclaimed, 'now I know where they are. I saw the Lykkegard people go past with their cows on their way to the Säter. When our cows heard the tinkle from the bell-cow, they made their way through the hedge and followed the others.'

Her anxiety about the cows had for a time made Gertrud wide awake. She quickly made up her mind to go as far as the Säter and fetch the cows; otherwise one would never know when they would come back. And she walked briskly along the steep and stony road.

But after walking uphill some time, the road took a turn, and it lay before her, covered with slippery fir-needles and almost quite level. She recognised at once the road of her dream. There were the same sun-spots on the whitish-yellow moss, and the same straight towering trees.

Again she was overcome by the same feeling of drowsiness that she had had all the morning. She went along, waiting for what would now come. She peeped under the fir-trees to see if there were any of those strange beings that wander about in the darkness of the forest. She did not see anything move under the trees, but in her mind strange thoughts arose. Suppose she really should be revenged upon Ingmar! Perhaps she would then be relieved from the constant fear she felt? Perhaps she would then not go out of her mind. The thought began to take root in her mind that it would be a good thing if Ingmar could be made to suffer what she suffered.

She walked for rather a long time on the road, and grew more and more surprised that she did not meet anybody, when suddenly

the pretty road ended in a green meadow in the forest. She came to a beautiful little spot, covered with verdant grass and many flowers. On one side rose a steep mountain, and on the other sides stood mountain-ash in bloom, amongst light green birches and dark fir-trees. A broad stream flowed down the mountain-side, wound its way through the meadow, and then rushed down into a gap covered with shrubs and bushes.

Gertrud suddenly stood still; all at once she knew the spot. The stream was called the Black Stream, and strange stories were told about it. It had happened several times that people who had gone across it had seen events which had taken place far away. A shepherd-boy who went across the stream once saw a bridal procession on its way to a church far away in the north; and a charcoal-burner once saw a King riding to his coronation, with a crown on his head and a sceptre in his hand.

Gertrud's heart nearly stood still. 'May God have pity on me for what I shall see here,' she sighed. Poor miserable I, I must go across—I must go across to fetch my cows! Oh, Lord, do not let me see anything dreadful or wicked! Let me not fall into sore temptation!

But that she would see something she never doubted for a moment. She was so sure of it that she hardly dared to step on to the slippery stones leading across the stream. When Gertrud was halfway across the stream, she saw something move in the forest on the other side; but it was no bridal procession: it was a lonely man, slowly walking towards the meadow.

He was very tall, and was dressed in a long black garment that reached to his feet. His head was uncovered, and his hair hung in long black locks over his shoulders.

But as soon as Gertrud saw his face, she knew that He who came towards her was Jesus.

He walked slowly towards her, and when His eyes fell upon her she saw that He had compassion on her, whose heart was so full of earthly fear, and whose soul was filled with thoughts of revenge, and with the thistles and poisonous herbs of sorrow.

When Jesus looked at Gertrud, she felt her soul filled with peace and bliss and a quiet restfulness. And when He had passed her there was no longer any grief or bitterness in her heart, but it had all disappeared like a sickness that has been healed, and after which have come health and strength.

Gertrud stood for a long time quite still. The vision passed away, and when she looked round it was gone altogether. But the impression of what she had seen did not pass away. She

folded her hands, and raised them in ecstasy. 'I have seen Jesus!' she said, 'I have seen Jesus! He has taken my sorrow away, and I love Him. Now I can never love anybody else in this world.'

All the cares of this life seemed to pass away, and life's long years appeared but as one short day, and everything earthly became indifferent and insignificant. At the same time it became clear to Gertrud what she should do with her life.

In order not again to fall into that terrible fear, and that she should not again be tempted into sin and revenge, she must go away from this place. She must go with the Hellgumians to Jerusalem.

That thought arose in her heart as Jesus went past her. She thought that it came from Him, she had read it in His eyes.

\* \* \* \* \*

On the beautiful June morning when Berger Sven Persson's daughter was married to Ingmar Ingmarsson, a young woman came early in the morning to the farm and asked if she could speak to the bridegroom. She was tall and slender, and she had drawn her head-kerchief so far down over her face that one could only see a soft white cheek and her red lips. On her arm she carried a basket, with some small knots of home-woven trimmings and some hair chains and bracelets.

She gave her message to an old maid-servant whom she met outside, and who went in and told the housewife. The housewife answered: 'Go back and tell her that Ingmar Ingmarsson is just going to set out for the church. He cannot possibly speak to her.'

As soon as the stranger had received this message she went away. No one saw her any more that morning. But when the bridal party had returned from church, she came back and asked if she could speak to Ingmar Ingmarsson.

This time she gave her message to one of the farm hands, who stood idling outside the stable door, and he went in and told the housewife. 'Tell her,' said the housewife, 'that Ingmar Ingmarsson is just going to sit down to the wedding-feast. He has not time to speak to her.'

When she received this message, she sighed and went slowly away, and did not come back again until late in the evening, when the sun was setting. This time she gave her message to a child that was sitting astride a gate, and the child went straight into the best room and told the bride. 'Tell her,' said the bride,

'that Ingmar Ingmarsson is dancing with his bride. He has no time to speak to others.'

When the child came out with this answer, the strange woman smiled and said: 'Now you are not speaking the truth; Ingmar Ingmarsson is not dancing with his bride.'

Soon after the bride thought to herself: 'Now I have told an untruth on my wedding-day!' She repented of it, and went up and said to Ingmar that a strange woman was standing outside, and wanted to speak to him.

Ingmar went out, and saw Gertrud standing at the gate waiting.

When Gertrud saw him coming she went on to the road, and Ingmar followed her. They walked in silence until they were some distance from the wedding-house.

Ingmar looked as if during the last two or three weeks he had grown quite an old man. His face had become more cautious and shrewd. He also stooped more, and looked more humble now that he was rich than he did when he was a poor man.

He was not glad to see Gertrud. Every day that passed he tried to make himself believe that he was satisfied with the exchange he had made. 'For we Ingmarssons do not really care for anything else in the world than ploughing and sowing the fields of Ingmars' Farm,' he often said to himself.

But what he took even more to heart than the loss of Gertrud was that there was now one person in the world who could say that he had not kept to what he had promised. As he followed Gertrud, he thought the whole time of all the scorn and contempt she had a right to heap upon him.

Gertrud sat down on a stone by the roadside, and placed the basket beside her. She drew her head-kerchief still further over her face. 'Sit down,' she said to Ingmar, pointing to another stone; 'I have much to tell you.'

Ingmar sat down, and was glad that he felt so calm. 'It is not so bad as I had expected,' he thought. 'I thought it would have been much worse to see Gertrud again, and hear her speak. I was afraid that my love for her would completely have overcome me.'

'I would not have come like this and disturbed you on your wedding-day,' said Gertrud, 'if I had not been compelled to do so. I am going away, and shall never come back again. I should have gone a week ago, but something happened which made it necessary for me to put off going away before I had spoken with you.'

Ingmar sat huddled up and quite silent. He looked like



a person who raises his shoulders and lowers his head in expectation of a great storm coming upon him. The whole time he was thinking: 'Whatever Gertrud may say, one thing is certain: I did the right thing in choosing the farm. I could not have lived without it. My life would have been utterly ruined if the farm had fallen into other hands.'

'Ingmar,' said Gertrud, blushing as she spoke—'Ingmar, you remember, no doubt, that five years ago it was my intention to join the Hellgumians. I had given my heart to Jesus, but I took it from Him to give it to you; and in so doing I did a great wrong, and therefore all this has come upon me. Just as I once forsook Jesus, even so I have been forsaken by the one I loved.'

As soon as Ingmar understood that Gertrud wished to tell him that she was going away with the Hellgumians, he involuntarily showed signs of disapproval. He had a strong feeling of displeasure. 'I can't stand her joining these Jerusalem people and going away to a foreign land,' he thought. He made as many objections as if she had still been his affianced bride. 'You must not think like that, Gertrud. God has never intended this as a punishment.'

'No, no, Ingmar, not as a punishment—I don't mean that—but only to show me how wrongly I chose that time. Oh no, not as a punishment! I am so happy now. I do not want for anything; all sorrow has been taken away from me. You must be able to understand that, Ingmar, when I tell you that God Himself has chosen and called me.'

Ingmar was silent. His face hardened; he grew wary and cautious. 'How stupid you are!' he said to himself. 'You should be only too glad to let her go. The wide sea between you two is best—the wide sea, the wide sea!' But that within him which rose against Gertrud going away was all the same stronger than himself, and he said: 'I cannot understand that your parents will allow you to go away.'

'They would not allow me,' answered Gertrud, 'and I know it so well that I have not even ventured to ask them. My father would never give his consent; I don't think he would even hesitate to use main force to prevent me. The hardest part of all is that I am obliged to steal away from them. They think that I am going about selling my trimmings, and they won't know anything before I have joined the Hellgumians at Gothenburg, and have left Sweden.'

Ingmar was much disturbed by hearing that Gertrud would

cause her old parents so great a sorrow. 'Does she understand how badly she is behaving?' he asked himself. He was just going to impress this upon her, when he stopped himself. 'It is not the proper thing for you, Ingmar, to reproach Gertrud, whatever she may do,' he thought.

'I know quite well that it will be very hard for father and mother,' said Gertrud, 'but I am obliged to follow Jesus. A smile broke over her face when she mentioned the name of her Saviour. 'He has saved me from sorrow and anguish,' she said with great feeling, folding her hands.

And as if she had only now found courage, she pushed her head-kerchief back and looked straight into Ingmar's eyes. It seemed to Ingmar as if she were comparing him with a picture of someone else, whom she saw before her, and he felt how mean and insignificant she found him.

'It will be very hard for father and mother, I know,' said Gertrud again. 'Father is so old now that he will have to give up the school, so they will have even less to live upon than before. And when he has nothing to do he becomes cross and irritable. Mother will not have an easy time with him. I am afraid they will both be very sad. If I could have stayed at home and cheered them, things would have been very different.'

Gertrud hesitated, as if she did not like to finish what she wanted to say, and Ingmar felt almost overcome with emotion. He guessed that Gertrud wanted to ask him to look after her old parents. 'And I, who thought she had come here to shower scorn and contempt upon me,' he thought; 'and instead she puts her whole confidence in me.' 'You have no need to ask me, Gertrud,' said Ingmar. 'It is a great honour to show one who has treated you as I have done. Believe me, I shall behave better to your old parents than I have done to you.'

Ingmar's voice trembled, and some of the shrewd cautiousness disappeared from his face. 'How good Gertrud is to me!' he thought. 'When she asks me to do this, it is not only for the old people's sake, but also to show me that she forgives me.'

'I knew, Ingmar, that you would not say no when I asked you about this,' said Gertrud. 'And now I have something else to tell you.' Her voice became stronger and more cheerful. 'I have a great present for you.'

'How prettily Gertrud talks!' Ingmar suddenly said to himself. 'I don't think that I have ever heard anyone speak with such a gentle, happy, bell-like voice.'

'About a week ago I left home,' Gertrud said, 'and had

intended going to Gothenburg, in order to be there when the Hellgumians arrived. The first night I spent at the Bergsana Saw-mills with a poor widow, whose name is Marie Bouving. That name I want you to remember, Ingmar; and if she is ever in need, you must help her.'

'How beautiful Gertrud is!' Ingmar thought, as he nodded and promised to remember Marie Bouving's name. 'How beautiful she is! What will become of me when I can never see her any more? If I have acted wrongly, then God help me for having given her up for the sake of the old farm! How can fields and forests be as much to me as a human being? Can they smile with me when I am happy? can they comfort me when I am sorrowful? There is not a thing in the world that can make up for the loss of one who loves one.'

'Marie Bouving,' continued Gertrud, 'has a little room behind her kitchen, where she gave me leave to sleep. "You ought to sleep well to-night," she said, "for you shall sleep on the bedding that I bought at the sale at Ingmars' Farm." As soon as I laid down I felt that there was a hard lump in the pillow under my head. I thought, "This is not a particularly comfortable bed Marie has bought"; but I was so tired after walking the whole day that I fell asleep. In the middle of the night I awoke and turned the pillow, so as not to feel the hard lump. I noticed then that the pillow had been cut, and had been badly sewn together with large stitches. In the pillow was something hard which rustled like paper. I did not think there was any necessity for me to lie on such a hard lump, so I tried to pull it out. At last I succeeded. It was a small parcel tied up with string and sealed.'

Gertrud stopped for a moment to see if Ingmar was not curious, but Ingmar had not listened very attentively.

'What pretty movements Gertrud makes with her hands!' he thought. 'I don't think I have ever seen anyone so graceful, or walk so lightly, as Gertrude. Yes, there is an old saying that human beings love human beings above everything else. But there is no doubt I did right, for it was not only the farm, but the whole parish that needed me.'

All the same, he was troubled by feeling that it was much more difficult now than a little while ago to convince himself that he loved the farm more than he loved Gertrud.

'I put the parcel down beside the bed,' continued Gertrud, 'and thought that in the morning I would give it to Marie; but when daylight came I saw that your name was written outside the cover. I examined it more closely, and at last I made up my

mind to take it with me, and give it to you without saying anything about it, either to Marie or anyone else. Here it is, Ingmar. It belongs to you.'

Gertrud took a little parcel from the bottom of her basket and gave it to Ingmar, whilst she looked at him expectantly, as if she felt sure he would be pleasantly surprised.

Ingmar took the parcel without much curiosity as to what it could be. His mind was occupied with trying to keep down the bitter repentance which he felt was overtaking him.

'If Gertrud only knew,' he thought, 'how dangerous it is for me to see her when she is so gentle and good! It would have been much better if she had come to upbraid me. I ought to be glad that she is so, but I cannot. It seems as if Gertrud were grateful to me that I have forsaken her. And I cannot bear the thought.'

'Ingmar,' said Gertrud, in a tone that at last made him understand that it was something very important she had to tell him, 'I have been thinking that when Elias was lying ill at Ingmars' Farm he must have used that pillow.'

She took the parcel out of Ingmar's hand and opened it. Ingmar heard a rustle as from crisp bank-notes. Then he saw that Gertrud counted up twenty bank-notes, a thousand kroner each. She held them up before his eyes. 'Look, Ingmar: here is the money your father left to you. You can guess that it was Elias who hid them in the pillow.'

Ingmar heard what she said, and he saw the notes, but everything seemed to him to be in a mist. Gertrud held out the notes to him, but he could not grasp them, and they fell on the ground. Gertrud took them up and put them in his pocket. Ingmar felt that he staggered like a drunken man.

All at once he raised his right arm in the air, clenched his fist, and shook it, just as a drunken man might have done. 'My God! my God!' he said.

Oh, how he wished that he could really have talked with God, could have asked Him why this money had not been found before. Why it should come now, when he did not need it, when he had lost Gertrud for ever. The next moment his arm fell heavily upon Gertrud's shoulder.

'You know how to revenge yourself, Gertrud!'

'Do you call this revenge, Ingmar?' said Gertrud, terrified.

'What should I call it? Why did you not bring me this money at once?'

'I wanted to wait until your wedding-day.'

'If you had come before I was married, I could no doubt have

arranged to buy the farm from Berger Sven Persson, and then I could have married you.'

'Yes, I knew that.'

'But now you come on my wedding-day, just when it is too late.'

'It was too late in any case, Ingmar. It was too late a week ago, and it is too late now, and it is too late for ever.'

Ingmar had again sunk down on the stone. He covered his face with his hands and sat moaning.

'And I, who had thought that there was no help possible! And I, who thought that no human power could help me! And then I see that I *could* have been helped—that we could all have been made happy!'

'One thing you must understand, Ingmar,' said Gertrud. 'When I found the money, I knew at once that it could help us in the way you mean. But it was no temptation to me—no, not for a single moment—because I belonged to someone else.'

'You should have kept them yourself,' cried Ingmar. 'I feel as if a wolf were tearing and gnawing in my heart. It was nothing when I knew that it was impossible. But now when I know that I could have had you!'

'I came here to bring you happiness, Ingmar.'

They were getting impatient at the farm. They came out on to the steps, and began to shout, 'Ingmar! Ingmar!'

'And the bride who is waiting for me!' he cried in the anguish of his heart. 'And that it should be you, Gertrud, who has caused all this. When I forsook you, it was because of sore necessity, but you have destroyed everything, simply to make me unhappy. Now I know how father felt when mother killed the child,' burst from him.

He broke into violent sobs. 'I have never before felt towards you as I feel now,' he groaned. 'I have never loved you half so much as I do now. Oh, I never knew love could be so bitter and terrible!'

Gertrud laid her hand gently and softly on his head. 'It has never, never been my intention to revenge myself upon you, Ingmar. But as long as your heart is bound to the things of this world it is bound to sorrow.'

Ingmar went on sobbing for a long time. When at last he looked up, Gertrud was gone. People came running from the farm to look for him. He struck his fist hard against the stone upon which he was sitting; an expression of dogged determination came over his face. 'Gertrud and I may perhaps meet again,' he thought, 'and things might go differently then to what they have done to-day. We Ingmarssons are known to attain what we strive after.'

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE DEAN'S WIDOW

It should also be recorded how everybody tried to dissuade the Hellgumians from going to the Holy Land. It seemed sometimes to echo from the mountains and valleys: 'Do not go! do not go!'

It was not only their friends and neighbours, but the great people around, who tried to make them give up their plans. The Judge and the magistrate would not let them alone. They asked them how they knew that these Americans were not deceiving them. They did not know what kind of people they were going to join. There was neither law nor justice in that distant land; one could any day be carried off by brigands; and there were no roads—everything would have to be carried on horseback.

The Doctor told them they would not be able to stand the climate; and Jerusalem was full of small-pox and all kinds of disease; they would go away only to die.

The Hellgumians answered that they knew all this, and that was just why they were going. They were going in order to fight against small-pox and all kinds of disease; to make roads; to till the ground. God's land should no longer remain uncultivated; they would transform it into a paradise. And no one was able to prevail upon them to abandon their journey.

Down in the village near the church lived an old lady, the widow of the Dean. She was very, very old; she lived in a large room on the first-floor of the post-office, opposite the church: she had lived there ever since she left the Parsonage.

People on their way from church were in the habit of bringing her either a little freshly-baked bread or a little butter or cream. On these occasions she always had the kettle put on the fire for coffee, and the one who could shout the loudest talked with her, for she was very deaf. Then they tried to tell her what had

happened during the week, but they never knew how much she had heard of what they told her.

She never went out, and at times people seemed to forget all about her. Then someone passing saw her old face behind the white curtains, and they thought : ' We must not forget her, she is so lonely. To-morrow, when we have killed the calf, I will go and see her, and take her a little veal.'

No one could ever really find out what she knew, and what she did not know of what went on in the parish. She grew more and more feeble, and at last she never asked about anything concerning this world. She only sat reading a volume of old sermons which she knew by heart.

An old servant lived with her, who helped her to dress and undress and cook her food. They were both very much afraid of thieves and mice, and preferred not to have any light in the evening, for fear of fire.

Several of those who had now joined the Hellgumians had formerly been in the habit of frequently bringing her little gifts. But after they were converted and had separated themselves from everyone else, they no longer came to see her. But no one knew whether she understood why they did not come ; neither did people know whether she had heard anything about the emigration to Jerusalem.

But one day the old lady ordered her servant to get a carriage and pair, for she meant to go out driving. The old servant was frightened, and no mistake ! But when she began to expostulate, the old lady pretended to be stone-deaf. She only raised her hand, pointed with her first finger, and said : ' I mean to go out driving, Sara Lena ; you will have to get the carriage.'

There was nothing left for Sara Lena but to obey. She had to go to the Pastor in order to borrow a decent carriage. After that she had a good deal of trouble in airing an old fur cape and a velvet bonnet that had been lying in camphor for the last twenty years. Nor was it an easy task to get the old lady down the stairs and into the carriage. She was so fragile that her life could be as easily snuffed out as a candle. When at last she was safely seated in the carriage, she said she wanted to go to Ingmars' Farm.

The people at the farm were not a little surprised when they saw who it was who came driving up. They came and lifted her out of the carriage, and brought her into the best room. There were several of the other Hellgumians present ; they were sitting at the table and singing during the meal. They had lately been

in the habit of assembling and having their meals together, which consisted of rice and other light food ; this was a preparation for the approaching journey through the desert.

When the Dean's widow came inside the door, she stopped and looked round the room. Some of them tried to speak to her, but to-day she could not hear anything at all. She raised her hand and said in that hard, dry voice one often hears in a deaf person : 'You do not any longer come and see me ; therefore I come here to tell you that you shall not go to Jerusalem. It is a wicked city. It was there they crucified our Saviour.'

Karin Ingmarsdotter tried to answer her.

She did not hear anything, but continued : 'It is a wicked city. Bad people live there. It was there they crucified Christ. I have come here to-day,' she went on, 'because this has been a good house. Ingmarsson has been a good name. It has always been a good name. You are to remain in our parish.'

Then she turned and left the room. Now she had done her duty, now she could die in peace. This was the last duty she had to perform in this life.

Karin Ingmarsdotter burst into tears when the old lady had driven away. It was the first and only time any one saw Karin show any signs of doubt about the great undertaking. 'Perhaps it is not right that we are going away,' she said. But she was very glad that the old lady had said : 'It is a good name. It has always been a good name.'



## CHAPTER IX

### THE DEPARTURE

ONE beautiful July morning a long train of carriages and waggons set out from Ingmars' Farm. It was the Hellgumians, who were at last ready with their preparations, and now began their journey, the first stage being the long drive to the railway-station.

On its way through the village, the long procession of carriages passed a miserable hovel which was called Myckelmyre. The people who lived there were disreputable and wicked, just the kind of people one could imagine had been born when our Lord's eyes were turned away, or when He had been occupied with other things.

There was a whole flock of dirty ragged children, who were always lying about outside the house, shouting and calling the passers-by bad names; there was an old grandmother, who generally sat by the roadside tipsy; and there was a husband and a wife who were always quarrelling or fighting. No one had ever seen them do any work; people did not know whether they begged more than they stole, or stole more than they begged.

When the Hellgumians drove past this wretched, miserable house, which was in no better condition than such a house generally is when wind and rain year after year have been allowed to do their worst, they saw the old woman, sober and tidy, standing in the same place at the roadside, where one was accustomed to see her drunk and helpless, and four of the children stood by her as clean and as tidy as was possible for them to be.

When those who were driving in the first carriage noticed them, they slackened their pace, and drove quite slowly past them; and so did all the others—they went as slowly as they could make the horses go.

And all those who were going away suddenly burst into violent weeping, the older members quietly and silently, whilst the children gave way to sobs and loud cries.

The Hellgumians in later years could never understand why nothing had moved them so much as the sight of Beggar-Lena, who stood poor and miserable by the roadside. But even to this day their eyes fill with tears when they relate how that day she had resisted the corn-brand, and was standing there, sober and clean, with the children washed and tidy, to do honour to their departure.

When they had all passed by, Beggar-Lena also began to cry. 'They are going to heaven to meet Jesus,' she said to the children. 'They are all going to heaven, but we must remain in the ditch by the roadside.'

\* \* \* \* \*

When the long train of carriages and waggon had driven half-way through the parish, they came to the long floating-bridge that lay and rocked on the waters of the river.

It was a difficult bridge to cross. First one had to drive down a steep incline to reach the riverside; then the bridge rose somewhat suddenly, so as to let boats and timber pass under it, and at the other end of the bridge the road ascended so abruptly that both man and beast shuddered at the thought of having to climb it.

That bridge always gave much trouble. The planks rotted, and had continually to be replaced. When the ice broke up the bridge had to be watched day and night, lest it should be damaged by the ice-blocks; and when the spring floods were very high they tore away large pieces of it, and carried them right down to the waterfalls at the Bergsana Saw-mills.

But the people of the parish were glad for their bridge; they were proud of owning it. Had it not been for the bridge, they would have been obliged to have a boat or a ferry every time they wanted to cross from one side to the other.

The bridge groaned and swayed when the Hellgumians passed over it, and the water rose up between the planks and splashed the horses' legs.

It quite hurt those who were going away that they would never see their dear bridge again. They thought that the bridge was something in which they all had a share. The houses, the farms, the fields, and the forests, were all owned by different people, but the bridge was the joint property of them all. They were all sorry at the thought of having to leave it.

But was there nothing else that they had in common? Had they not the church, lying beneath the birch-trees on the other side of the bridge? Had they not the pretty white school-house, and the Parsonage?

And what else had they in common? They had the beauty of all they could see from the bridge; the beautiful view over the broad and mighty river, that flowed peacefully, with the summer light upon it, between the picturesque groups of trees; the wide view through the valley, right up to the blue mountains. All this was theirs. It was burnt into their memory. And they would never see it any more.

When the travellers came to the middle of the bridge, they began to sing one of Sankey's hymns. 'We shall meet again,' they sang, 'we shall meet again—we shall meet in Paradise again.'

There was no one on the bridge to hear them. They were singing to the blue hills of their birthplace, to the gray water of the river, and to the waving trees. Never again would they see them, and their farewell song was mingled with sighs and sobbing:

'Thou beautiful place of our birth, with thy friendly red and white farms, amidst their thick clusters of birches, with thy fertile fields and green meadows, divided by the winding river, hear us! We pray to God that we may meet again. We pray that we may see thee again in heaven!'

\* \* \* \* \*

When the long train of carriages and waggon had crossed the bridge it passed the churchyard. In the churchyard was a big flat stone that was crumbling away from old age. There was neither name nor date upon it, but the tradition was handed down from olden times that under it lay one of the Ingmar family.

Once when Ljung Björn Olofsson, who was now going to Jerusalem, and his brother Per, were children, they had been sitting on that stone talking together. To begin with they had been good friends, but after awhile they had disagreed about something; they had become excited and raised their voices. They had long ago forgotten what they were disputing about, but what they had never forgotten was this: that when their dispute was at its highest they heard a distinct and deliberate knocking under the stone upon which they were sitting. They immediately became silent. They took each other by the hand and quietly stole away, and they never afterwards saw the stone without thinking of that day.

When Ljung Björn now drove past the churchyard, he saw his brother Per sitting on the stone, with his head leaning on his hands.

Ljung Björn pulled up, and made a sign to the others that they

should do the same and wait for him. He got down, climbed over the stone wall, and went and sat down on the stone beside his brother.

Per Olofsson said at once: 'You have sold the farm, Björn.'

'Yes,' answered Björn, 'I have given everything which I possessed to God.'

'Yes, but the farm was not yours,' answered his brother quietly.

'Not mine?'

'No, it belonged to the family.'

Ljung Björn did not answer, but sat silently waiting. He knew that when his brother had seated himself on that stone it was for the purpose of saying words of peace. He was not afraid of what Per would say.

'I have bought the farm back again,' his brother continued.

Ljung Björn gave a start. 'You could not bear the thought of its going out of the family?'

'I am not rich enough to do it for that reason,' he said. Björn looked questioningly at him. 'I did it that you might have some place to come back to.' Björn was quite overcome, and began to sob. 'And that your children might have some place to come back to.' Björn laid his arm round his brother's neck. 'And for the sake of my dear sister-in-law,' said Per. 'It will be good for her to know that she has a house and home waiting for her. The old home will always be ready for you and yours, whenever you wish to come back.'

'Take my place in the carriage, Per,' said Björn, 'and go with the others to Jerusalem, and I will remain here. You deserve to go to the Promised Land far more than I do.'

'Oh no!' said his brother, and smiled. 'I understand what you mean, but I am better suited to remain at home.'

'I think you are most suited for heaven,' said Björn. He bent down over his brother. 'Now you must forgive me everything,' he said.

They stood up and grasped each other's hands in farewell.

'This time no one knocked at the stone,' said Per, as he got up.

'It was strange that you should think of going to sit on the stone,' said Björn.

'We two brothers have had hard work to keep the peace when we have met lately.'

'Do you think I could be in the mood for quarrelling to-day?'

'No, but I become angry at the thought that I shall have to lose you.'

They went on to the road, and Ljung Per went up to Björn's

**wife** and shook her hand warmly. 'I have bought the Ljung Farm,' he said. 'I tell you this now so that you may know that **you** have always a place to come back to.' He also shook hands **with** the eldest of the children. 'Remember, little one, that you **have** farm and land to come back to when you want to return to **the** old country. He went round to all the children, until he **came** to little Erik, who was only two years old, and who could **not** understand what he meant. 'Remember, children, that you **are** to tell little Erik that he has farm and land waiting for him **whenever** he wants to come back.'

And the travellers went on their way.

\* \* \* \* \*

When the long train of carriages and waggons had passed the churchyard, the travellers were met by a large crowd of relatives and friends who had come to bid them good-bye. They had a long wait here, for all wanted to shake hands and say a few parting words.

And when they came through the village the road was lined with people who wanted to witness their departure. The people stood at every door, the windows were full of people, they stood on the low stone walls, and those who lived further off stood on the mounds and the hills, waving a last farewell.

The long procession drove slowly past all these people until it reached the house of Lars Clementsson, the Chairman of the Parish Council. There they stopped and Gunhild got down to go in and bid her parents good-bye.

Gunhild had lived at Ingmars' Farm ever since she had made up her mind to go with the others to Jerusalem. She thought it was better to do that than to remain at home in constant strife and discord with her parents, who could not reconcile themselves to the thought that she would leave them.

When Gunhild got down, she saw that the house looked quite deserted. There was not a person to be seen at the windows or outside. When she went to the gate she found it locked, but she got over a stile and went into the yard. The front-door was also locked and bolted. She went to the kitchen door; this, too, was fastened with a clasp on the inside. Gunhild knocked several times, but, as no one came to open the door, she found a piece of wood and unlatched the door, so that she was able to get in. There was not a soul in the kitchen, nor was there anybody in the best room, nor in the little room behind it.

Gunhild would not go without leaving some token of her having been to say good-bye to her parents. She went to the

bureau and opened it. She knew that her father always kept pen and ink there. She could not at first find the ink, and looked for it in the different compartments and drawers. In doing so she came upon a small box that she remembered very well. It was her mother's—she had received it from her husband as a wedding-present; and when Gunhild was a little girl it had always been one of her greatest treats to be allowed to examine its contents. It was enamelled white, and decorated with a garland of flowers, and inside the lid was a little picture of a shepherd playing the flute to a flock of white lambs.

Gunhild's mother had always kept her most precious treasures in this box. There she had kept her mother's wedding-ring, which had been worn quite thin, her father's old watch, and her own gold ear-rings.

But when Gunhild opened the box she saw that all these things had been taken out, and in their place lay a letter. It was a letter which she had written herself. A year or two ago she had paid a visit to Mora, and when she had sailed over the Siljan Lake the boat was upset. Several of those on board were drowned, and her parents had heard that she (Gunhild) was amongst those who had perished. Gunhild knew that her mother must have been so glad by receiving her letter that she had taken everything else out of her bridal box, and kept the letter there as her greatest treasure.

Gunhild turned as pale as death; her heart nearly seemed to stop beating. 'Now I know that it will kill my mother,' she said.

She no longer thought of writing anything, but hurried away. She got into the carriage and took no heed of all the questions as to whether she had seen her parents and what they had said. The rest of the drive she sat motionless, with her hands in her lap, looking straight before her. 'I am killing my mother,' she thought. 'I know that I am killing my mother. I know that my mother will die. I shall never again have a happy day in this life,' she thought. 'I shall get to the Holy Land, but I shall kill my own mother.'

\* \* \* \* \*

When the long train of carriages and waggons had at last driven through the village, they came to a birch-wood. Here the travellers for the first time noticed that they were followed by two persons whom they did not know. Whilst they were passing through the village, they had been so taken up with saying good-bye and taking leave that they had not noticed the strangers

**in** the carriage, but in the wood, one by one, their attention was **drawn** to it.

Sometimes it drove past all the other carriages, so that it was **first** in the procession; at other times it slackened speed and **allowed** the others to pass it. It was quite an ordinary carriage, **of** the kind that everyone uses, and on that account it was **impossible** to find out to whom it belonged. Neither did anyone **recognise** the horse.

It was driven by an old man, who was quite bent, and who had **wrinkled** hands and a long white beard. No one knew who he **was**, that was quite certain. But by his side sat a woman whom they thought they ought to know. No one could see her face, for she had a dark shawl over her head, and she held it so closely together that they could not even see her eyes.

Several tried to guess from her figure who she was, but no two persons guessed alike.

Gunhild said at once, 'It is my mother,' but Israel Tomasson's wife declared that it was her sister. There was scarcely anyone who had not his or her own idea as to whom it could be. Tims Halvor thought, for his part, that it was old Eva Gunnarsdotter.

The carriage accompanied them the whole way, but the woman did not draw the shawl away from her face for a single moment.

To some of the travellers she became one they had loved, to others one they had feared, but to the most of them she seemed as if she were one that they had forsaken.

Several times when the road was wide enough the strangers did the same thing: they drove past the whole train of carriages, and then pulled up and allowed them all to go past.

Then the unknown woman sat with her face turned towards the travellers, and watched them the whole time; but she made no sign to any of them, and no one could say for certain who she was. She drove with them right to the railway-station; then they expected to see her face. But when they got down from the carriages and looked for her, she had gone.

\* \* \* \*

Whilst the long train of carriages and waggon<sup>s</sup> drove through the parish, no one was seen cutting the grass in the meadows, no one was seen turning the hay, no one stacking it. That morning all work was at a standstill; everybody stood idle by the wayside, or came driving in their Sunday clothes to accompany the travellers on the way. Some accompanied them five miles, some ten, but there were also some who accompanied them right to the railway-station.

Whilst they were driving through the parish, they only saw one single man at work, and that was Hök Matts Eriksson. He was not mowing the grass—that he considered more as a pastime—but he was hard at work clearing away stones from his land, just as he had done in his youth, when he was preparing his ground for cultivation.

Gabriel Mattsson could see his father from the road as he drove past. Hök Matts was working in the home-field with his crowbar; he loosened the stones, and then carried them to the stone wall. He never looked up from his work, but trudged along with his stones, and some of them were so heavy that Gabriel almost wondered that they did not break his back. And then he flung them down with such force that they splintered and sparks flew out.

Gabriel was driving one of the waggons, but his horses had to take care of themselves for a long while, for Gabriel could not take his eyes away from his father.

Old Hök Matts toiled and slaved. He was working just as he did after his son's birth, when he had strained every nerve to improve the farm. His grief was heavy upon him, but Hök Matts raised up larger and larger stones, and piled them on to the stone wall.

Soon after all the carriages and waggons had driven past, a violent thunderstorm came on, followed by a heavy shower. Everybody that possibly could took shelter, and Hök Matts was going to do the same, but he changed his mind and remained in the field. He dared not leave off working.

At noon his daughter came out into the doorway to call him to dinner. Hök Matts was not very hungry; all the same, he thought he could do with something to eat. But he would not go in; he dared not give up working.

His wife had gone with Gabriel to the station; late in the evening she came back alone. She went out into the field to tell her husband that now their son had gone, but he went on working with his crowbar and carrying stones, and would not stop a moment to hear what she had to say.

The neighbours noticed how hard Hök Matts worked that day. They went out to watch him, and then went back again, saying: 'He is still in the field. He has been at it the whole day without a break.'

Evening came, but the light still lingered for a while, and Hök Matts went on working. He felt that if he left off working for a single moment his grief would overwhelm him.



His wife came out and stood looking at him. The field was almost cleared from stones, and the stone wall was high enough, but still the little man went on toiling, carrying stones more fit for a giant.

Now and then a neighbour came to see if Hök Matts was still working, but no one spoke to him. It grew so dark that they could no longer see him. But they could hear him—could hear how he went on toiling, carrying stones to the stone wall.

But at last, when he was raising the crowbar, it slipped out of his hands. When he stooped down to get it, he fell. He remained lying on the ground, and before he had pulled himself sufficiently together to rise he fell asleep.

Some time afterwards he went into the house. He said nothing, did not attempt to take off his clothes, but simply threw himself on the wooden bench and fell asleep.

\* \* \* \* \*

The long train of carriages and waggons at last reached the railway-station. The line had only recently been made, and the station was quite new. It was built on a piece of ground that had been cleared in the midst of the thick and dark forest. There was no town, no fields nor gardens, but everything was on a large scale, in anticipation of an important township springing up around the station.

Round the station itself the land had been levelled. A broad paved carriage-road had been made, and there were large goods-sheds, and large open places covered with gravel. A couple of shops, some workshops, a photographic studio, and an hotel, had already been built round the gravelled square, but the rest was a bare, desolate waste.

The Dalar River also flowed past here. It came surging wild and angry out of the dark forest, and rushed foaming onwards down several small falls. The travellers could hardly believe that it was the same broad, majestic river to which they had said farewell in the morning. Here there was no smiling valley to look down upon, but on every side the view was closed in by dark, fir-covered heights.

When the little children who were going with their parents to Jerusalem were lifted out of the carriages in this strange and gloomy place, it affected them so much that they began to cry. The children, before, had looked forward very much to the journey to Jerusalem, but they cried a great deal at leaving the old homes, and they were quite inconsolable when they got to the station.

The grown-up people were all taken up with getting their baggage stowed away in a goods-carriage. They all helped, and no one had any time to look after the children and see what they were doing. But the children all got together. They stood in a cluster, and held council as to what they should do.

Shortly afterwards the older children took the little ones by the hand, and began to walk away from the station, two and two, a big child and a little child. They went by the same road they had come, over the square covered with gravel, over the bare, desolate waste, over the bridge, and into the dark forest.

Soon afterwards one of the women suddenly thought of the children. She opened a box in order to get something for them to eat. She called to them, but no one answered. They had quite disappeared. Two of the men went to look for them. They followed the marks which the many small feet had made in the sand, and when they had gone a little way into the forest they discovered the children.

They went in a long procession, two and two, a big child and a little child. When the men called to them, they did not stop, but went on walking.

The men had to run in order to overtake them.

The children tried to run away, but the little ones could not keep up; they tumbled over each other. Then the children stopped, weeping and miserable.

'But, children, wherever are you going?' asked one of the men.

The smallest of the children set up a loud wail, but the eldest boy answered: 'We don't care to go to Jerusalem. We want to go home.'

And long after the children had been brought back to the station, and seated in the carriages, they went on whimpering, and crying: 'We don't want to go to Jerusalem. We want to go home.'

PART II  
IN THE HOLY LAND  
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## CHAPTER I

### THE HOLY ROCK AND THE HOLY SEPULCHRE

It was a scorchingly hot day in the month of August in Palestine. Every day the sun shone straight down upon the children of men. There was not a cloud in the heavens, and no rain had fallen since April. It was, perhaps, not any worse than it always is at that time of the year, but it was almost unbearable. One hardly knew how to endure the heat, or where to take refuge from it.

It was, perhaps, best down at Joppa—not exactly in the town itself, which, with its houses crowded closely together upon the steep rock, towered above the country like a huge fortress, and where an unbearable smell arose from the dirty streets and the large soapworks; but the town lay quite close to the sea, which always brought some freshness, and in the neighbourhood it was a little cooler. Joppa is surrounded by hundreds of orange plantations, where the unripe oranges hang under the stiff, dark-green leaves, upon which the sun seems to have no effect.

But all the same, how hot it was in Joppa! The gigantic leaves of the tall ricinus shrubs were withered and curled up, and even the hardy pelargoniums had not strength enough to flower any longer, but lay drooping on the stone heaps and in the sand-pits almost buried in dust. When one saw the red flowers of the cactus hedges, one could imagine that it was all the heat, which the thick stems had absorbed during the summer, which now sprang out in great red flames. One only fully realized how hot it must be when one saw the children, who ran across the beach to get to the sea, lift up their feet complainingly because the pretty white sand was as hot as a burning coal.

And if one could not bear it in Joppa, where was one to go? It was in any case better there than on the vast plain of Saron, on the other side of the town, between the sea and the mountains. There were certainly people still living in the towns and villages which were scattered over the plain, but it was not easy to under-

stand how they could survive all this heat and drought. They did not, however, often venture outside their houses, which had no windows, and never left the towns, where the walls of the houses and a few isolated trees yielded some little protection against the sun. And on the open plain it was as difficult to find a green blade as a human being. All the splendid red anemones and poppies of the spring, all the small marguerites and pinks that had covered the ground with a thick carpet, had vanished; so had the crops of wheat, rye, and durra that grew on the cultivated fields near the towns. They had been cut and taken home long ago, and the harvesters, with their oxen and asses, with their songs and dances, had gone back to their villages. All that remained of the glories of the spring were the tall withered stems that rose above the scorched field, and which had once borne beautiful and fragrant lilies.

There were people, as a matter of fact, who declared that one could best stand the summer in Jerusalem. They said that the town certainly was cramped and overcrowded with people, but as it lay on the brow of the long ridge of mountains which traversed the whole of Palestine, no gust of wind could sweep over the sand, from whatever corner of the earth it might come, without its coolness reaching the Holy City. But notwithstanding this much-lauded wind and the light mountain air, there was more than sufficient of summer heat in Jerusalem also. People slept at nights on the roofs, and shut themselves in during the daytime. They had to content themselves with drinking ill-smelling water that during the winter rains had gathered in the subterranean cisterns, and they were afraid that even that would not hold out. The slightest wind raised thick clouds of lime-dust, and if one walked along the white roads outside the town, one's feet sank deep into the softest dust. But the worst was, that the heat of the summer prevented people from sleeping. Everybody slept badly. Many lay awake night after night; and it was owing to this sleeplessness that the people of Jerusalem by day were down-cast and irritable, and at night were frightened by visions and tormented by fears and despair.

On such a night a middle-aged American lady, who for several years had resided in Jerusalem, lay restlessly tossing on her bed without being able to fall asleep. She removed her bed from the room on to the open gallery that went round the house, she put cold compresses on her aching head, but nothing helped. She lived about five minutes' walk from the Gate of Damascus in a palatial house that stood quite by itself. One would have

thought that the air would be fresher there, but that night it seemed to her as if all the sultry heat of the city had gathered over the house. Yet there was a little wind, but it came from the desert, and was hot and sharp as if full of invisible dust; and, added to this, a number of street dogs had gone on a roving expedition outside the walls of the city, filling the air with their miserable yelps.

When the American lady had been lying sleepless for some hours, a feeling of infinite despondency overcame her. She tried to find comfort in the thought that since she had come to Jerusalem, led by Divine revelation, everything had gone well with her. She had founded a sect, and overcome innumerable persecutions and difficulties. But nothing brought her rest; her nervous fears only increased. She lay imagining that she and her faithful followers would be murdered; that her enemies would put fire to the house, after they had first closed every way of exit. She thought that the city of Jerusalem was sending all its fanatics against her, that it fell upon her with all that hatred, all that love of destruction, which was harboured inside its walls.

She tried to regain her usual happy trustfulness. Why should she despair now, just when her cause had gained such progress, when the Gordon colony had been strengthened by fifty splendid Swedish peasants, who had come over from America, and when she expected still more of these good, trusty people to come from Sweden? In reality, the cause had never appeared so hopeful as at the present time.

To escape from these thoughts, she arose at last, and threw around her a long wide cloak. She opened a little door at the back of the house, and went out walking in the direction of Jerusalem. She soon, however, left the road and went up a little steep hill. From its top she could see in the moonlight the city, with its battlements and its innumerable large and small cupolas outlined against the nocturnal sky. Although fighting against her fear and uneasiness, she could not help noticing the solemn beauty of the night. The white-green moonlight of Palestine shed its lustre over everything, and gave to everything a strange, mysterious weirdness. Suddenly the thought came to her that in the same way as in old castles there are haunted rooms, where ghosts have their abode, so this ancient city and the naked heights surrounding it might be the haunted chamber of the old world, a place where one might expect to see vanished grandeur descending from the mountains, and the dead of the past steal around in the darkness of the night.

Mrs. Gordon felt no terror when these thoughts arose within her ; on the contrary, she was filled with glad expectation. Ever since the night when she had suffered shipwreck on board *L'Univers*, and heard God's voice speaking to her, she had now and then received a message from the other world : it seemed to her as if something like this was awaiting her now. She felt as if her brain expanded, and that her thoughts worked with wonderful ease and clearness. Her senses became more acute ; she perceived that the night was no longer silent, but full of voices and wonderful sounds.

Before the change which had taken place became clear to her, she heard a deep and mighty voice, which seemed to proceed from some very old being, utter these words : ' Verily, I can with pride raise my head above the dust : no one is adored like I am, no one is my equal in power and holiness.'

Hardly were these words spoken, before a sharp clang was heard from the mighty bell of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. It was like one single stroke, but it sounded proud and sharp like a contradiction.

The first voice continued : ' Is it not I who have built the city in the desert, and preserved it to this very day ? Is it not I who have filled the world with the fear of God ? Is it not I who have stopped the flow of the world, and thrown it into a new channel ?

Mrs. Gordon looked around. The voice came from the east, from that part of the city where Solomon's temple had once stood, and where Omar's Mosque was sharply defined against the grayish-green sky of the night. Could it be one of the servants of the mosque that, from a minaret, in this way sent forth his song of praise into the stillness of the night ?

' Listen,' continued the voice which came from the site of the old temple. ' I remember this place even before a city was built upon the mountain. I remember it as a steep and inaccessible mountain ridge. At first it was but a single solid rock, but all the water which from the creation of the world had fallen upon it broke it into pieces, and splintered it into innumerable hills. Some of these hills had gently-undulating slopes ; others were broad mountain plateaus with perpendicular walls ; others, again, were so small and steep that they were hardly fit for anything but bridges between the different heights.'

When the deep voice became silent, some short clangs came from the direction where rose the dome of the Holy Sepulchre.

Mrs. Gordon had now become accustomed to the sounds



**rushing** through the night, and she discovered that this, too, was a **voice** uttering audible words. She seemed to hear a short 'I, too, **have** seen this.'

The first voice again spoke : 'I remember that at the very top of this ridge was a mountain called Moriah. It looked dark and repulsive, with its steep sides and sharply defined top rising from out of the deep, dark valleys at the bottom of which wild rivers rushed. Towards the east and the south and the west the mountain rose steep and inaccessible ; only towards the north it was connected by a broad strip of land, as if by a bridge, with the heights that towered on the other side of the deep valleys.'

Mrs. Gordon sat down on a small heap of stones. She rested her head on her hands and listened.

As soon as the first voice grew silent, as if wearied by talking, there came from the other side : 'I, too, remember how the mountain looked in the beginning.'

'One day it happened,' came from the site of the Temple, 'that some shepherds, who wandered about the mountains with their flocks, discovered this mountain, which was hidden between the other mountains, as if it brooded over great treasures or wonderful secrets. They climbed up to its broad top, and found there a most holy thing.'

Here the voice that spoke was suddenly interrupted by the voice with the sound of a bell : 'They found nothing but a rock, lying on the east side of the mountain. It was a huge round, somewhat flat stone, which was raised a little above the ground by another stone, and mostly resembled the head of a gigantic mushroom.'

'But the shepherds,' continued the first voice, 'who knew all the holy legends even from the creation of the world, were filled with great joy at the sight of it. "This is the large suspended rock which our forefathers have told us so much about," they said. "This is the stone which was the first God created of the world. From here He extended the plain of the earth towards the west and the east, towards the north and the south ; from here He built up the mountains, and rolled out the oceans, even unto the borders of the firmament."'

He who spoke was silent for a moment, as if he expected a contradiction, but the voice of the bell was mute.

'It is strange,' thought Mrs. Gordon. 'It cannot be human beings who are speaking.' But in reality it did not seem at all strange to her. The sultry wind and the pale-green night made the most wonderful things appear quite natural.

'The shepherds hastened down the side of the mountain,' continued the old voice, 'to make known everywhere that they had found the head corner-stone of the world. And soon I saw large multitudes making their way up the mountain of Moriah, in order to make sacrifices to the Lord on me, on the suspended rock, to thank Him for His glorious work of creation.'

When this had been said, the voice rose to something resembling a song, and, with the high, shrill tones with which the dervishes are wont to recite the Koran, it cried: 'Then for the first time I received sacrifice and adoration. The news of their having found me spread far and wide. Nearly every day one could see long caravans wending their way down the grayish-white mountains, in order to find the mountain of Moriah. Verily, I can with pride raise my head. Through me the steep mountain-top was no longer lonely and deserted. For my sake it was that so many people made their way to Moriah, that the merchants found it to their profit to bring their ware hither. For my sake it was that the mountain became inhabited by people who lived by providing fuel and water, frankincense and fire, pigeons and lambs, to those who wanted to make sacrifice.'

The other voice continued silent, but Mrs. Gordon lifted up her head in surprise. He who spoke must be the Holy Rock. It was the huge mountain block which rests beneath the magnificent mosaic arches in the Mosque of Omar whose voice she heard.

Now it was heard again: 'I am the first and the only one; I am the one whom men shall never cease to adore.'

This was hardly said before it was answered in strong tones from the Church of the Holy Sepulchre: 'Thou hast forgotten to relate that in the centre of this mountain plain, where thou thyself didst rest, was a miserable little hill, covered with wild olive shrubs. And thou wouldst, no doubt, rather forget that the son of the old patriarch, who was the son of the second father of mankind, Noah, one day came on to the mountain of Moriah. He was so aged that he was on the brink of the grave; he went slowly and with tottering steps. He was attended by two servants carrying implements needed for the excavation of a mountain grave.'

Now it was the old, hoarse voice that was silent.

'Thou pretendest not to know that Shem's father, Noah, had possessed and hidden the skull of Adam, the first man, as a precious relic of the father of his race. When Noah died, he left the skull to Shem, and not to one of his other sons, for he foresaw that from Shem would proceed the greatest of all nations. And

when Shem felt his last hour approaching, he determined to bury the holy relic of his race on the mountain of Moriah. But inasmuch as he possessed the gift of prophecy, he did not bury the skull under the Holy Rock, but under the little insignificant hill, which was covered with olive-trees, and which from that day went by the name of Golgotha, or the place of a skull.'

'I remember this happening quite well,' resumed the sharp tones. 'And I also remember that those who worshipped the rock found it strange. They thought that the patriarch was much too old and too near to death to really know what he was doing.'

A single shrill tone came from the church. Mrs. Gordon thought it most resembled a scornful laugh.

'But what importance can be attached to such a trifling incident as that?' came from the mosque. 'The great rock increased more and more in power and holiness. Princes and their people came from afar to insure happiness and prosperity by their sacrifices. I also remember the day when a patriarch who was greater than Shem visited the mountain. I have seen Abraham wandering hither, white-bearded and venerable, with his son Isaac at his side. And Abraham did not go to thee, O Golgotha, but he built his altar and bound the lad on the Suspended Rock.'

An angry interruption now came from the Church of the Sepulchre. 'This, of course, will always be reckoned as an honour to thee, but do not quite forget that part of this honour belongs to me. Dost thou not remember that when the angel of God stayed the hand of the patriarch, and he looked about for a sacrifice, it was on Golgotha he found the ram caught by its horns in the thicket of olive shrubs?'

Mrs. Gordon continued to listen with rapt attention. But the longer she listened to the dispute between the two holy places, the less hopefully she thought of her own call. 'Oh, my God, why hast thou given to me the work of preaching the Gospel of unity? Only strife and discord have endured since the creation of the world.'

Suddenly the old voice again commenced. 'I forget nothing of what is worth remembering. Thus, I do not forget that even in the time of Abraham the mountain plain was anything but a desert. Here was a city with a King, who was the High Priest of the Holy Rock, and who ruled over a people of priests and other servants of the Holy Rock. This King was Melchisedek. He was the first to institute fixed seasons for offerings, and beautiful and holy ceremonies, that were solemnized at the Holy Rock.'

Immediately an answer came from the other side. 'I, too, acknowledge Melchisedek to be a holy man and a prophet. No better proof could be found that he also was one of God's chosen than that he wished to be buried in a cave on Golgotha, on the same spot where rests the skull of Adam. Hast thou never thought of the prophetic meaning of this, that the first sinner and the first High Priest were buried in the same place?'

'I have heard that thou layest great stress upon this,' answered the Holy Rock, 'but I know something of still greater importance. The city on the mountain grew and increased. The valleys and the heights round about were peopled, and received their proper names. Soon it was only the eastern slope of the mountain that retained the name of Moriah. The mountain on the southern side was called Zion, the one towards the west Gareb, the one towards the north Bezetha.'

'Still, it was but a mean town that lay on the mountain,' came as an answer from the church. 'Only shepherds and priests lived there. People did not care to come and live in this barren and stony desert.'

This was answered in such a distinct and jubilant voice that Mrs. Gordon was almost startled as she sat there listening.

'I have seen King David, attired in a coat of red, and in shining armour, looking upon this city before he established the seat of his throne here. Why did he not choose the rich and smiling Bethlehem? why not Jericho, in its fertile valley? Why did he not make Gilgal, why not Hebron, the chief city of Israel? I tell thee that he chose this spot for the sake of the Suspended Rock. He chose it because the Kings of Israel must dwell upon the mountain which my holiness had overshadowed for thousands of years.' And now the voice, for the second time, began a song of praise. 'I think upon the great city, with its walls and towers; I think upon the King's palace on Mount Zion, with its thousand dwellings; I think upon the stores of the vendors, and of the workshops of the artisans, upon protecting walls, and high gates and towers; I think upon the crowded streets, upon all the beauty and splendour of the city of David. And when I think upon all this, verily I must say: "Great is thy power, O rock! All this hast thou called forth. Proudly canst thou lift up thine head. No one is thine equal for adoration and holiness." But thou, Golgotha, wast but a spot on the earth, a barren mountain-top outside the city wall. Who hath adored thee, who hath worshipped thee, who hath known of thine honour?'

Whilst this song of praise was sounding through the night, the

voice of the bell could be heard, angry, yet more subdued than before, as if from veneration, saying: 'One can tell that thou art growing old; thou exaggeratest everything thou hast seen in thy youth, as old age is wont to do. David's city only extended over Zion on the southern side. It did not even reach as far as to where I am, in the middle of the mountain. It was quite natural that I should remain outside the city wall.'

But the other voice continued its jubilant song without allowing itself to be interrupted. 'Yet thou attainedst to thy greatest honour, O rock, during the reign of Solomon. The land about thee was levelled and made smooth, and covered with flat stones, and round about thee were erected colonnades, as in the guild-halls of Kings. In the midst the Temple was raised, with its Holy Place and its Holy of Holies. And over thee, O rock, the Temple was raised, and on thee, who art the head corner-stone of the world, rested the Ark of the Covenant, together with the two tables of stone in the Holy of Holies.'

To this there came no dissent from the church, only a dull sound like a moan.

'And in the time of Solomon water was led from the depths of the valleys to the heights around Jerusalem, for Solomon was the wisest amongst Kings. Then trees sprang out on the barren, grayish-white mountains, and roses grew amongst the stones. And at harvest-time figs and grapes, pomegranates and olives, could be gathered in the pleasure-gardens that covered the mountain, for the joy of Solomon. But thou, Golgotha, remainedst a barren mountain outside the city wall; thou wast so poor and sterile that none of the rich men in the time of Solomon deigned to add thee to their pleasure-gardens, and no poor man would plant even a vine on thee.'

At this new attack it seemed as if his adversary took courage and spoke up for himself. 'But thou forgettest that, even at this time, something happened which foretold Golgotha's future glory. For it was just at that time that the great Queen of Sheba came to visit King Solomon, and the King received her in his palace, which was called the House of the Forest of Lebanon, because it was built of timber brought from distant Lebanon. When Solomon showed the Arabian Queen this vast edifice, the like of which she had never beheld, one of the posts in the wall attracted her attention. It was unusually solid, and when one looked closely at it, one could see that it consisted of three trunks grown together. The heart of the great Queen was filled with emotion when she saw that this tree had been brought to the King's

palace, and she hastened to tell him its history. She told him that the angel who guarded Paradise after the expulsion of our first parents once allowed Adam's son Seth to enter the beautiful garden. He was allowed to go so far that he could see the Tree of Life. When Seth left the garden, the angel, on parting, gave him three seeds of the wonderful tree. These seeds Seth planted on Adam's grave on Mount Lebanon, and from these three seeds grew up three stems, all forming one tree. "It is this tree," the Queen said, "that the carpenters of King Hiram have felled for thee, O King, and which have been let into the walls of thy palace. But it has been prophesied that on this tree a man shall one day die; and when this has come to pass, Jerusalem shall fall, and all the tribes of Israel shall be scattered." In order that this dire prophecy might not be fulfilled, she advised the King to destroy the post, and Solomon commanded that it should be taken out of the wall of his palace, and that it should be thrown into the Pool of Bethesda.'

Silence reigned for a while after this long story. Mrs. Gordon hardly thought that she would hear any more.

But at last the voice of the bell again began: 'My thoughts go back to times of sore tribulation. I remember the Temple being destroyed, and all the people being carried away into captivity. Where then, O rock, were thy honour and thy glory?'

It was some time before the answer came from the rock: 'Am I almighty? But though I have fallen I have always risen again. Dost thou remember the glory that surrounded me in the time of Herod? Dost thou remember the three courtyards that surrounded the Temple. Dost thou remember the fire on the altar of burnt sacrifice, that at night burnt with so high a flame that it lighted up the whole city? Dost thou remember Herod's gate of the Temple called Beautiful, where he erected more than a hundred pillars of porphyry? Dost thou remember the fragrance of the frankincense coming from the Temple, which with a western wind could be discerned even as far as Jericho? Dost thou remember the clang when the copper gates were opened? Dost thou remember how the Babylonian curtain outside the Holy of Holies was interwoven with roses of pure gold?'

The voice from the church answered shortly and gruffly: 'All this I remember, but I also remember that at that time Herod caused the Pool of Bethesda to be dredged. I remember that his workmen found at the bottom of the pool the Tree of Life that had been let into the wall of the palace of Solomon, and that they threw the mighty post on to the borders of the pool.'

'Dost thou remember,' continued the voice from the rock, proud and jubilantly—'dost thou remember the magnificent city where the Princes and the people of Judah dwelt on Zion, and where Romans and foreigners dwelt in the neighbourhood of Bezetha? Dost thou remember the Castle of Mariamne and the Castle Antonia? Dost thou remember the strong fortresses? Dost thou remember the walls with battlements?'

'I remember it all,' the church responded; 'but I also remember that it was at that time that an honourable counsellor, Joseph of Arimathea by name, had a sepulchre hewn out of a rock in his garden, which was close to Golgotha.'

The voice from the mosque trembled a little, but it continued without hesitation.

'Dost thou remember the immense concourse of people who visited Jerusalem at the great feasts? Dost thou remember how all the roads in Palestine were crowded by travellers, and the slopes outside the town were covered with tents? Dost thou remember the men from Rome, from Athens, from Damascus, from Alexandria, that journeyed thither to behold the glories of the Temple and of the city? Dost thou remember that proud Jerusalem?'

The voice of the bell answered with immovable gravity: 'Verily, I remember all that, but I have not forgotten, either, that at that time the servants of Pilate found the Tree of Life on the edge of the Pool of Bethesda, and made from it a cross, upon which a doomed malefactor was to be crucified.'

'Slighted and despised thou hast always been,' came scornfully from the mosque, 'though up to that time thou wast but an insignificant spot on the earth. But then the shame came upon thee that the executioners made use of thee as a place of execution. I remember one day when they raised three crosses on the Mount of Golgotha.'

'Verily shall I deserve to be rejected, if ever I forget that day,' answered the church solemnly, its voice sounding as if accompanied by choirs of psalm-singers. 'And I also remember that at the same time that the tree of the Cross was planted on Mount Golgotha the great sacrifice of the Passover took place on Mount Moriah. The Israelites in festive attire entered the pillared courtyards. Between them they carried long poles, upon which hung the sacrificial lambs; and when the courtyards were so full of people that there was no room for any more, the gates of the Temple were closed, and by a blast of trumpets the signal was given to begin the celebration.'

Then the lambs were hung up on hooks between the pillars and slaughtered. The priests stood in a long row across the courtyard and handed, in vessels of silver and gold, the blood of the lambs to the altar of burnt sacrifice. And so much blood was shed that it flowed over the whole courtyard, and the priests were obliged to stand on stools, in order that the hem of their long white garments should not be soiled with the blood. But in the same moment the Crucified died on Golgotha, the great feast of sacrifice in the Temple was interrupted. A great darkness fell upon the Holy Place, the whole Temple was shaken as if by an earthquake, and the Babylonian veil was rent in twain from top to bottom, as a sign that from that hour power and honour and glory should pass from Moriah to Golgotha.'

'Golgotha was also shaken by that earthquake,' interrupted the old voice. 'The whole mountain was rent.'

'Yes, verily,' answered the church, in the same deep, psalm-like tone. 'A great rent was made in the Mount of Golgotha, and through it the blood from the Cross flowed down to the sepulchre in the rock, making known to the first sinner and the first High Priest the consummation of the Atonement.'

At that moment a strong continuous ringing went forth from the church, whilst from the minaret of the mosque ascended the plaintive sounds which call the faithful to prayer. Mrs. Gordon thought that one of the holy hours of the night had struck, but it came so close upon this discourse on the Crucifixion that it seemed to her as if the two old voices had taken this opportunity of giving vent to their pride and humiliation.

This noise had hardly subsided before the mosque commenced in a solemn voice: 'I am the great rock, the everlasting; but what is Golgotha? I am what I am—no one can be in doubt where to find me; but where is Golgotha? Where is the mountain where the Cross was lowered into the rocky ground? No one knows it. Where is the grave where the body of Christ was laid? No one with certainty can point out the spot.'

Immediately the answer came from Golgotha: 'Dost thou also come with these imputations? Thou oughtest to know better. Thou art so old that thou shouldst know where Golgotha lies. Thou hast for thousands of years seen the mountain in its place outside the Gate of Righteousness.'

'Yes, assuredly I am old—exceeding old,' repeated the mosque. 'But the old cannot always remember. There were many barren hills outside Jerusalem, and there were an endless



number of graves cut in the rock. How can I know which is the right one?

Mrs. Gordon grew more and more impatient. She felt half inclined to join in the conversation. What did it all mean? Did these strange voices only sound in her ear, to tell her of old stories she had heard long ago? She felt tempted to call out to them, that they should reveal to her the inmost secrets of the kingdom of God; but the two old voices thought of nothing but their miserable quarrel as to which was the greatest in honour and glory.

Also the voice from the church sounded impatient: 'It is hard over and over again having to answer the charge that I am not the one that I say I am. Thou must remember that even the first Christians were wont to visit me, in order to revive the memory of the great events that had taken place on Golgotha?'

'Yes,' answered the mosque, 'this is all very well; but I am almost certain that the Christians lost sight of thee amongst all the new houses and streets when the town was extended, and Herod Antipas built the new wall round the city.'

'They did not lose sight of me,' answered the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. 'They continued to gather on Golgotha right up to the time of the siege of Jerusalem, when they left the city.'

To this the Holy Rock did not answer a word. It seemed overcome by the sorrowful memories thus recalled.

'The whole of thy Temple was destroyed,' shouted the church. 'The holy courtyard of the Temple was buried in ruins, and the Roman Emperor commanded that these ruins should not be removed. For six hundred years, O rock, thou wast hidden in dust and ashes.'

'What are six hundred years to me?' answered the rock, proud and scornful. 'No one will ever doubt that I am in my right place, but about thee there is always dispute.'

'How can there be any dispute about me, who was again found by a miracle of God?' answered the church, with humble gladness. 'It came about when the Empress Helena, who was a Christian and a saint, was commanded by God in a dream to go to the Holy Land and build churches on the holy sites. Ah me! I remember the day when the Empress came to Jerusalem; I remember the train of pious and learned men who accompanied her. I remember how in the beginning she sought in vain for the place of the Holy Sepulchre. But at that time there was in the midst of the city a temple of Venus, and the Empress heard that the Emperor Hadrian had given orders for it to be built on some

spot which the Christians considered holy. At her bidding the temple was pulled down, and it transpired that it had been built upon Golgotha. Under the temple they found, in a state of complete preservation, both the Holy Sepulchre and the Rock of Golgotha, with the grave of Melchisedek, and the rent in the mountain from which it was said that blood was still flowing. She found the anointing stone and——'

Now it was the mosque's turn to interrupt the voice with a loud, scornful laugh.

'But listen to the last and most important proof,' the church continued, without allowing itself to be put out. 'There was nothing the Empress desired so much as to find the Holy Cross, but it was nowhere to be found. After searching for a long time in vain, an old, wise man came to the Empress, and told her that the Cross was buried deep under the ground. He pointed out the spot where she should look for it. They had to dig very deep, for the soldiers had thrown the Cross into one of the moats, and filled up the moat with earth and stones. I can still see the pious Empress, as she sat on the edge of the moat and encouraged her workmen! I remember also the day when the Holy Cross was again found at the bottom of the old moat.'

The church now alone spoke. It did not allow itself to be disturbed by the derisive cries and the mocking laugh of the mosque.

'I remember the many miracles which followed upon the discovery of the Cross. I do not think that even thou wouldst dare to deny them. Thou, too, hast heard the joyful shouts of the sick who were healed by this most sacred relic. Thou, too, rememberest the bands of pilgrims making their way hither from all countries. Thou rememberest the wild and pious men who dwelt in the mountain caves of Palestine; thou rememberest all the convents and churches that sprang up. Or hast thou forgotten the glorious buildings, O rock, which Constantine and his mother caused to be erected over the Holy Sepulchre? Upon the spot where the Cross was found a basilica was built, but over the Holy Sepulchre a beautiful church was erected. Assuredly thou dost remember, O rock, the Greek master-builders, who made their buildings as splendid as if they were the apartments of an Emperor's palace. Assuredly thou rememberest the caravans that wended their way over the mountains, laden with precious stones and gold to be used for the ornamentation of the churches. Thou rememberest the pillars of porphyry of the basilica, with their capitals of silver; thou rememberest the

mosaic arch of the Church of the Sepulchre ; thou rememberest the narrow windows, through which the light streamed, subdued by panes of alabaster and stained glass, every ray sparkling as if proceeding from a diamond ; thou rememberest the carved trellis-work round the galleries, the double rows of pillars, and the dome, slender though strong, which crowned the edifice ; thou rememberest in the centre of the church the cave of the Holy Sepulchre, lying unadorned and unpolled in all this splendour.

‘ And the time after the erection of these buildings ! Thou no doubt rememberest that all the Christians in the East looked upon Jerusalem as their Holy City, and that it was no longer pilgrims alone who visited it. Dost thou not remember that Bishops came, attended by their priests, and built themselves churches and palaces round the Church of the Sepulchre ? Didst thou not see the Patriarch of the Armenians, as well as the Patriarchs of the Greeks and the Assyrians, erect their temples here ? Didst thou not see Kopts coming from ancient Egypt, and Abyssinians from the heart of Africa ? Thou sawest Jerusalem rebuilt, a city of churches and convents, of hospices and pious institutions. Thou knowest that its splendour was greater than ever. But all this was my work, O rock. At that time thou didst lie forgotten and unnoticed upon Mount Moriah. Thou wast covered with ruins, hidden under a heap of ashes. No one remembered thy existence.’

Thus challenged, the mosque on the rock made reply : ‘ What are a few years of humiliation to me ? Am I not the same for ever ? Only a few centuries passed, and there came to me one night a venerable old man in the striped mantle of the Bedouins, and with a turban of camel’s hair on his head. That man was Mahomet, the Prophet of God. He was taken up whilst alive into heaven, and his foot rested on my crown when he was removed from this earth. The same moment I, by my own strength, raised myself above the ground through my desire to follow him. I raised myself above dust and ashes. I am the everlasting one that can never perish.’

‘ Thou forsook thy people, thou traitor !’ groaned the church. ‘ Thou helpedst the infidels to victory.’

‘ I have no people ; I serve no one ; I am the everlasting rock ; those who worship me, those I protect. The day soon came when Omar made his entry into Jerusalem, and the great Caliph began to clear the site of the Temple, and himself took a basket of stones upon his head and carried it away. And some years

later the followers of Omar erected upon me the most magnificent building which the lands of the East have ever beheld.'

Here the voice of the bell interposed passionately: 'Yes, the building is beautiful, but dost thou not know from whence it cometh? Dost thou think that I do not recognise these mosaic arches, this splendid dome, these walls of marble, amongst which thou resteth in unadorned simplicity, as the Holy Sepulchre formerly did in the church of Helena. The whole of the mosque is built after the style of the first Church of the Sepulchre.'

Mrs. Gordon grew more and more impatient. The quarrel between the two holy places seemed to her mean and despicable. They had not a thought for the two religions which they represented: they only thought of boasting about the buildings that covered them.

The mosque continued: 'I remember many things, but not that I have ever seen that beautiful Church of the Sepulchre of which thou speakest.'

'Verily was it raised on Golgotha, but it was soon destroyed by enemies. It was built up again, and again destroyed.'

'On the other hand, I remember,' said the Holy Rock, 'that on Golgotha were many large and small buildings that were considered to be holy. They were wretched and dilapidated; the rain came in through the roof.'

'It is true,' answered the church, 'that was thy time, and a time of darkness. But I can say with thee, What are a few years of humiliation to me? I have seen all the lands in the West rise to help me; I have seen Jerusalem conquered by men from Europe, clad in armour, who for my sake had come hither. I have seen thy mosque transformed into a Christian church, and the Crusaders have raised an altar upon thee, O rock. I have seen the Knights of the Cross lead their horses into the arch under the site of the Temple.'

The old rock lifted its voice and sang as a dervish would sing in the desert.

But the church did not allow itself to be stopped. 'I remember how the Knights of the West took off their coats of mail, and seized pickaxes and trowels, to rebuild the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. I remember that they made the building so large that it could hold all the holy places. I remember how they covered the gray sepulchre with white marble both outside and in.'

The old voice interrupted: 'What good is it to thee, that thou wast built by Crusaders? Thy splendour has again departed.'

'I am filled with memories and holy places,' loudly shouted the Church of the Sepulchre. 'Within my walls I can point to the olive thicket where Abraham found the ram, and the chapel where the skull of Adam was buried. I can point to Golgotha and the sepulchre and the stone, where the angel was seated when the women came to weep over the dead. Within my walls is the place where the Empress Helena was wont to encourage her workmen, and the spot where the Cross was found. I possess the pillar upon which the Crucified was seated when He was crowned with thorns, and the anointing stone, and Melchisedek's grave. I possess the sword of Godfrey of Bouillon. I am still worshipped by Kopts and Abyssinians, by Armenians and Jacobites, by Greeks and Romans. I am crowded by pilgrims. . . .'

The old rock interrupted: 'What art thou thinking about, thou mountain-top, thou sepulchre, of which no one knows the spot? Wilt thou compare thyself with the everlasting rock? Is it not upon me that the holy, unspeakable name of Jehovah has been inscribed, which no one but Jesus has been able to decipher? Is it not upon my courtyard that Mahomet shall descend on the last day?'

As the quarrel between the two churches increased in violence, Mrs. Gordon stood up. She forgot that her voice was not strong enough to be heard at the same time as these two mighty voices. 'Woe unto you! woe unto you!' she cried: 'what kind of holy places are ye? Ye strive, and contend, and with your strife the world is filled with discord and hatred and persecution. But God's last commandment is Unity—do ye hear! God's last commandment, which I have received, is Unity!'

When these words were uttered, both the Holy Sepulchre and the Holy Rock were silent. Mrs. Gordon for a while almost thought that it was her words which had had the power to end their strife. But then she saw that all the crosses and all the crescents that were raised over the large domes of the Holy City became gilded little by little. The sun arose over the Mount of Olives, and all the voices of the night were silenced.

## CHAPTER II

### BO INGMAR MANSSON

AMONGST those who belonged to Hellgum's community in America, and followed him to Jerusalem, were three people who belonged to the old Ingmar family. They were the two daughters of Great Ingmar, who had gone to Chicago a short time after their father's death, and one of their cousins, Bo Ingmar Mansson, a young man who had lived two or three years in the United States.

Bo was a well-grown young man; he had light hair and light eyebrows, and a ruddy complexion, and looked very good-natured. There was not much in his features to remind one of the old family, but the likeness became apparent when he had some difficult work on hand or became agitated.

When he was a lad and went to Storm's school, he was both dull and slow. The schoolmaster often wondered that anyone belonging to such a clever family could have such difficulty in learning his lessons. But this slowness disappeared altogether when Bo went to America. He became quick and handy, but in his childhood he had so often been told how stupid he was that he always felt a little diffident.

People in the parish had been not a little surprised when Bo went to America. His parents owned a large farm, and were well-to-do people, and they would have liked to have kept him at home. There certainly had been some talk about Bo being fond of the schoolmaster's Gertrud, and that he went away in order to forget her, but no one really knew the rights of it. Bo had never confided in anyone except his mother, and, as she was Great Ingmar's sister, she was not likely to let out the secret—no one could ever make her say more than she wanted to.

The day Bo left for America his mother gave him a belt which she asked him to wear under his clothes. When Bo took it he noticed that it was very heavy; his mother had sewn some money

**in it.** 'You must promise me not to part with this belt before you are in need,' said his mother. 'It is not a great sum, but it is enough to enable you to come home again should things not go well with you.'

Bo promised not to take the money out of the belt unless he were in great need, and he faithfully kept his promise. True, he had not been greatly tempted to break it, as, on the whole, he had done well in America; but once or twice he had been so poor that he had had neither food nor lodging, yet he had always found some way out of the difficulty, and had not touched his mother's gift.

When Bo joined the Hellgumians, he was a little bothered at first as to what he should do with the belt. His new friends tried to follow the example of the early Christians: they divided all their property, and gave all their earnings to the joint fund. Bo also gave all he possessed, with the exception of what the belt contained. He could not quite make up his mind as to what was the right thing to do; something in him made him feel that he could not part with this money. He felt quite sure that our Lord would know that it was not from the love of money that he kept it, but because he was bound to keep the promise he had given his mother.

Bo also kept the belt when he joined the Gordonites. But he began to feel a certain uneasiness when he thought about it. He saw how good and self-denying Mrs. Gordon and several of her followers were, and he felt the greatest respect for them. He shuddered at the thought of what these people would think of him if ever they discovered that he was secretly carrying money about with him, although he had solemnly vowed to give up all he possessed to the community.

Hellgum and his followers had come to Jerusalem in the month of May, just about the time when the peasants at home in Dalarne were selling their farms. In June the news came to Jerusalem that Ingmars' Farm had been sold, and that Ingmar Ingmarsson had given up Gertrud in order to get back Ingmars' Farm.

Up to that time Bo had felt happy in Jerusalem, and often spoke about how glad he was that they had gone there. But from the day he heard that Gertrud was free he became depressed and silent.

No one in the colony could make out what had made Bo so low-spirited. Several tried to gain his confidence, but Bo would not tell anyone what troubled him. He could not expect any member of the colony to have much sympathy with love affairs.

They always preached that for the sake of unity it was necessary not to be fonder of one person than of another, and they declared that they loved everybody equally well. They had all, Bo included, made a solemn vow that they would never marry, but live in chastity as monks and nuns.

Bo never for a moment gave that promise a thought after he heard that Gertrud was free. He wanted at once to sever his connection with the colony, and go home in order to win her. Now he was very glad that he had kept the money, and could set out whenever he wanted.

The first few days he went about as if in a dream, and only thought of finding out when there was a steamer leaving Joppa; but it so happened that no steamer was leaving just then, and it dawned upon Bo that it would look better if he waited a little time before he left. If he went back at once, the whole parish would declare that he had done so for Gertrud's sake, and if he did not succeed in winning her, he would be the laughing-stock of everybody.

Bo just at that time had undertaken some work for the colony. The old Gordonites had hitherto resided in Jerusalem, but now they had taken the large house outside the Gate of Damascus in consequence of the large increase to the colony by the impending arrival of the Swedish peasants, and they were now busy getting the house ready. It had fallen to Bo's share to build an oven in the new house; he made up his mind to be patient, and not to leave before he had finished this work.

In the meantime his longing was so great that Jerusalem appeared to him little better than a prison. At night he often took the belt in his hand in order to feel the coins which were sewn into it. He was so happy when he felt these little, round things: he could see Gertrud before him; he forgot that she would never have anything to do with him, and felt so sure that he had only to go home in order to win her for his wife. When Ingmar had proved so false, surely Gertrud would at last learn to appreciate him, who had never loved anyone else but her the whole of his life.

In the meantime Bo made but little headway with his work. Either he was not a clever bricklayer, or his materials could not be good. He began at last to think the oven never would be ready. Once the arch fell in, and at another time he had placed the bricks so badly that the smoke made its way into the bakery.

In consequence of all this Bo was not ready to start until about the middle of August. In the meantime he saw so much



**of** the Gordonites and their life that he began to think better and better of them. Never had he seen people give themselves up so exclusively to help the sick, the poor and the sorrowful. And they felt no longing for the world, although some of them were so well endowed with riches that they could have procured everything they could possibly wish for; and others were so learned that there was hardly anything between heaven and earth that they did not know. Every day they held the most beautiful meetings, where they explained their religious views to the newcomers, and when Bo heard them speak, he felt that it was such a great thing to be allowed to help in reawakening the true Christianity, which had been neglected and forgotten for upwards of two thousand years, that he could hardly make up his mind to leave Jerusalem.

But when night came Bo took the belt in his hands, and when he did so his longing for Gertrud overcame him. And when he thought that he would not be able to help in the restoration of the true Christianity, he said to himself that there were so many others worthier than himself to do this. It would not matter much if such a stupid, simple fellow as he was were to leave the colony.

But what Bo really dreaded was the moment when he would have to stand up before the community and tell them that he wanted to go home. He shuddered at the thought that Mrs. Gordon, old Miss Higgs, the beautiful Miss Young, Hellgum, and his cousins—all these whose one desire was to serve the cause of God—would look upon him as lost. And what would God in heaven think of his flight? And what if he forfeited eternal bliss by deserting this great cause?

For every day that passed Bo grew more weary and unsettled. He now saw clearly how wrongly he had acted in keeping his mother's money. If he had not had the belt, he would not have had the means to get away, and then he would not have been placed in this sore temptation.

The colonists had just at this time several heavy expenses, partly on account of their removal, partly owing to a lawsuit in America in which they were involved. There were also a great many poor people in Jerusalem who were continually asking for help. As they never took pay for any service rendered or work done, on account of all the strife and discord of which money is the cause in this world, it was no wonder that at times they had hard enough work to make ends meet. Once or twice, when the expected remittances from America had been delayed, they had

hardly had sufficient for daily food. The whole community often knelt in prayer, asking God to help them.

At such times Bo felt as if the belt burnt him. But he could not persuade himself to part with it, now that his longing for home had become so strong. He also said to himself that it was now too late, that it would be impossible for him now to stand up and confess that he had gone about with so much money in all this time of need.

When August came, Bo had at last finished his work, and he was now determined to leave by the first steamer. One day he went outside the town and looked about for a secluded place. He sat down, cut the belt open, and took out the money. He sat with the small gold coins in his hand, feeling like a thief. 'God, forgive me!' he cried. 'When I joined the community I did not know that Gertrud would be free. Nothing else in the world would have made me forsake the colony.'

When Bo went back again to Jerusalem, he stole along with faltering steps, and with the sensation as if someone was walking behind him, watching him. When he placed some of the gold coins on the counter of one of the money-changers in David's Street, he looked so guilty that the Armenian who weighed his gold thought that he was a thief, and cheated him for at least half the amount.

The next day, early in the morning, Bo stole away from the colony. He walked eastwards, in the direction of the Mount of Olives, so that no one should have a suspicion as to where he was going, and he went to the station by a roundabout way.

He was, all the same, a whole hour too early for the train, and suffered agonies whilst he waited. He started every time anyone went past him, and tried in vain to persuade himself that he was not doing anything wrong, that he was a free man, and could go where he liked. He saw that it would have been better for him to have spoken openly with his friends, and not left them like this. He was so miserable from his fear of being recognised that he nearly turned back again.

Bo, however, went by the train. The carriages were all crowded, but he saw no one he knew. He sat thinking about the letters he would write to Mrs. Gordon and Hellgum. He pictured to himself how they would be read aloud to the whole community after morning prayers, and he could see the contempt expressed on every face. 'I am committing a shameful sin to-day,' he thought, and he felt a blot had come upon his character which nothing could ever remove. It seemed to him

more and more despicable that he had stolen away like this. He loathed himself, and felt he was a miserable coward.

He reached Joppa, and got out of the train. As he crossed the square in front of the railway-station, upon which the sun's rays burnt fiercely from the cloudless sky, he saw a number of poor Roumanian pilgrims. He stood still and looked at them. A Syrian dragoman told him that the pilgrims were ill when they landed from the ship that had brought them to Joppa. It had been their intention to go on foot to Jerusalem, but they were not able to do so. They had been lying outside the station the whole day. No one helped them, and they had no money. They would probably die as they lay there in the sun.

Bo turned round and went quickly away from the station. He could not forget these people, with their poor, feverish faces. Some of them were lying quite helpless, and could not even drive away the flies that worried them. It was quite clear to him that God had sent these poor people in his way in order that he should help them. Bo knew that no other member of the colony could have passed by without helping these unhappy people. He, too, would have helped them had he not become so wicked. He would no longer help his neighbour, because he had money, and could go home, he thought.

Bo went through the city gate, went down one or two streets, and reached a small square facing the sea. There the sea lay, silvery blue and quite smooth; only against the two black rocks of basalt lying in the entrance to the harbour were faint breakers. It was a beautiful day to begin the voyage. In the roads lay a big European steamer, flying the German flag. Bo had intended to go in a French steamer that was expected at Joppa that day, but he could see nothing of it. It must have been delayed.

The German steamer had apparently just arrived. A number of boatmen were hurriedly getting ready their boats to row out for the passengers. They tried who could be first; they shouted and shrieked, and threatened each other with the oars. All at once a dozen of them put off for the steamer. The big powerful boatmen stood up and rowed standing, to increase the pace. In the beginning they were a little careful, but when they had got past the two dangerous rocks an eager race began between them. Bo could hear from the shore how they laughed and egged each other on with shouts and cries.

He felt an irresistible desire to set off at once. He could just as well sail in the one ship as the other. It did not matter which, as long as he only got to Europe. He saw that there was still

one boat left. The boatman was old, and was apparently not able to get off as quickly as the others. It seemed to Bo as if this boat was lying there purposely for his sake. He jumped into it, and they at once set off.

The first moment Bo felt glad that everything was decided, but before the boatman had rowed many strokes a sudden fear came over him. What should he say to his mother when he saw her again? Could he tell her that he had used her money to bring shame and dishonour upon himself?

Bo saw before him his mother's face, with its many wrinkles and the peculiar strained expression about the chin. She was somewhat short-sighted, and therefore she was in the habit of coming close up to the person with whom she was talking, and looking him straight in the face. If his mother were here, she would come quite close to him and ask: 'Have you promised to keep to those people, Bo, and to help them in their good work?' 'Yes, mother, I have,' he would have to reply. 'Then you will have to stay with them,' his mother would say. 'It is quite enough to have one of the family breaking his word.'

Bo sighed heavily, but he now saw one thing clearly, and that was that he could not go back to his mother with dishonour upon him. There was nothing left for him to do but to return to the colony.

He ordered the boatman to turn back, but the man did not understand what he wanted, and continued rowing towards the steamer. Bo got up in the boat and tried to take the oars from him. The man resisted, and they nearly upset the boat in their struggle. Bo soon saw that he would have to let the man take him as far as the steamer, but at the same time he became afraid, lest the moments when he still had the power and will to turn back, might slip away from him. 'If I first get on board the steamer,' he thought, 'the longing to go away will perhaps get the better of me.'

But no, this must not happen; he was determined to put an end to this temptation for ever. He thrust his hand into his pocket, took out the bright gold coins, and threw them into the sea.

He had hardly done this before a gnawing pang of regret went through his heart. Yes, now he could say he had thrown away his happiness, now he had lost Gertrud for all time. He wrung his hands in despair.

When they had rowed a few minutes longer they met some boats, returning from the steamer, filled with passengers who wanted to land at Joppa.

Bo passed his hands over his eyes : he thought he saw a vision. It was precisely as if some of the church-boats, which on a Sunday came down the river at home in Dalarne, came rowing towards him on the smooth, sunny sea. The people who sat in the long-boats looked just as solemn and as serious as did the people of the parish at home when the boats laid to, at the landing-stage, below the church hill.

Bo could not in the first moment take in what he saw. He knew all the faces. 'Is not that Tims Halvor?' he asked himself. 'Is not that Karin Ingmarsdotter? And is not that Berger Larsson, whom I have so often seen standing in the smithy by the roadside hammering nails?'

Bo had been so wrapped up in his own thoughts that it took him some time to realize that it must be the pilgrims from his own parish, who had come a day or two before they were expected.

He stood up in the boat, waved his hand, and shouted 'Good-morning!' The silent people in the boats looked up, the one after the other, and moved their heads a little to show that they recognised him. Bo saw that he had not done the right thing by disturbing them at such a moment. It was not becoming for them at that moment to think about anything else but the solemnity of treading for the first time on Palestine's soil.

But Bo had never seen anything more beautiful than these quiet faces. He was filled at the same time both with joy and sorrow. 'These are the kind of people we have at home,' he thought. And he felt such a longing that he could almost have thrown himself into the sea to get the gold coins back again.

In the stern of one of the boats sat a woman with her kerchief drawn so far over her forehead that Bo could not see her face. But just as the boat passed she pushed it back and looked at him. And Bo recognised Gertrud.

Then Bo trembled from head to foot with deep emotion. He sat down and grasped hold of the seat. He was afraid of what he might do—afraid that he might throw himself into the sea in order the sooner to get to Gertrud. The tears rushed down his cheeks, whilst he folded his hands and thanked God. Never had anyone been rewarded as he had for having resisted sin ; never before had God been so good to any man.

## CHAPTER III

### THE MAN WITH THE CROSS

DURING all the years the Gordon colony had dwelt in Jerusalem, a man could be seen every day in the streets of the Holy City, carrying a rough heavy wooden cross. He spoke to no one, and no one spoke to him. No one knew whether he was a poor half-witted man who thought himself to be Christ, or whether he was a poor pilgrim doing penance.

This poor cross bearer slept at night in a grotto on the Mount of Olives. Every morning when the sun rose he went up the mountain, and looked down upon Jerusalem, which lay on the heights below him. He looked with care around the whole town as if in search of something. His eyes wandered from house to house, from dome to dome, eagerly gazing as if he expected some great change to have taken place during the night. At last, when he found out that everything was as usual, he gave a deep sigh, he went back to his grotto, lifted the great cross on to his shoulders, and placed upon his head a wreath made of prickly thorns.

Then he began to wander down the mountain, dragging his heavy burden between vineyards and olive-groves until he reached the high wall surrounding the Garden of Gethsemane. Here he usually stopped outside a low gateway, laid the cross on the ground, and leant against the door as if waiting for something. Over and over again he peeped through the keyhole into the little garden. If he saw any of the Franciscan monks who tended Gethsemane walking amongst the old olive-trees and hedges of myrtle, an excited look came over his face, and he smiled as if in glad expectation. But almost immediately he shook his head; he seemed to realize that the one he looked for was not coming. He again took up the cross, and wandered onwards.

Then he usually went down the lower terraces of the mountain into the Valley of Jehoshaphat, where the large Jewish cemetery lies. He dragged the heavy cross after him; it clattered against

the large stones, and brushed aside the small stones that covered them. Again and again he stopped when he heard the noise the stones made, and looked around, evidently thinking someone was following him. Every time he found he was mistaken he drew a deep sigh, and wandered on his way.

These sighs became a deep groan when he reached the bottom of the valley, and the task lay before him of carrying the huge cross up the western slope upon the top of which Jerusalem lies. On this side lie the graves of the Mohammedans, and here he often saw a sorrowing woman sitting, wrapped in her white garments, on one of the low, coffin-shaped gravestones. He would stumble towards her until she, frightened by the noise the cross made by being dragged over the gravestones, turned her face towards him—a face covered with a thick black veil, giving one the impression that there was nothing else behind it but a dark empty hole. Then he would turn away with a shudder and wander on.

He climbed with unspeakable difficulty right up to the top of the hill where the city wall rises. Then he generally went down a narrow pathway outside the wall, in the direction of the Hill of Zion, on the southern side of the mountain, and reached at last the small Armenian church which is called the House of Caiaphas.

He again laid the cross on the ground, and peeped through the keyhole ; but this did not satisfy him ; he seized hold of the bell-rope and rang the bell. When at last he heard a pair of slippers clattering along the stone slabs, he smiled and raised his hands to take off the crown of thorns. But as soon as the attendant who opened the gate saw who it was he shook his head.

The man with the cross leant forward and looked through the open door. His eyes wandered over the little courtyard where, according to the legend, Peter had denied his Saviour, and when he had assured himself that it was quite empty, his face assumed a look of deep dejection, and he quickly closed the door and wandered onwards.

The heavy cross clattered over the stones and over the remnants of the old walls of Zion. It was now dragged along at a greater pace, as if expectant impatience had endowed its bearer with greater strength. He went through the Gate of Zion into the city, and he did not once put down the cross until he stood outside the long gray edifice which is honoured as being the tomb of King David, but which is also said to contain the room where our Lord instituted the Holy Supper.

Here the old man used to leave the cross outside, whilst he himself went into the house. When the Mohammedan door-keeper, who otherwise had nothing but angry looks for all Christians, saw him coming, he bowed before him as for one whose mind is in God's keeping, and kissed his hand. Every time the old man received this respectful salutation, he looked expectantly into the door-keeper's face. But directly afterwards he pulled his hand away, wiped it with his long, coarse mantle, turned round and went out, and again lifted the cross on to his shoulders.

Thereupon he dragged himself with exceeding slowness down towards the northern part of the city, where the road of Christ's sufferings winds its way, dark and narrow. As long as he was in the crowded streets he would stop, looking everyone searchingly in the face, and then turn away in endless disappointment. Good-natured water-carriers, who saw how he sweated under his heavy burden, often offered him a little tin cup full of water, and the vegetable vendors often threw him a handful of beans or pistachios. When these gifts were offered to him, he at first received them with a joyous face, but then he turned away as if he had expected something quite different and better.

When he came to the Road of Agony, he looked more hopeful than during the first part of his wanderings. He did not groan so deeply under the weight of the cross. He straightened his back, and looked around like a prisoner who is certain of being released.

He began at the first of the fourteen stations on the Road of Christ's Sufferings, each of them being indicated by a small stone tablet. But he did not stop until he stood at the Convent of the Sisters of Zion, close to the Ecce Homo Arch, where Pilate brought forth Jesus to the people. Here he threw down the cross as if it were a burden that he need never carry any more, and knocked at the gate of the convent three heavy resounding knocks. Even before the gate was opened, he tore the crown of thorns from off his head; sometimes he was even so confident that he threw it to one of the dogs that generally lay sleeping outside the convent.

At the convent they knew his knock. One of the pious sisters opened the wicket, and threw a little round loaf to him.

Then he was beside himself with anger. He did not take the loaf, but allowed it to fall to the ground. He stamped his feet and uttered cries of wild despair. For a long time he remained outside the gate of the convent. At last the accustomed look of



patient suffering returned to his face. He stooped down, picked up the bread, and ate it with the ferocity of a beast of prey. He looked for the crown of thorns, and again lifted the cross on to his shoulders.

For a few moments he stood in blissful expectation outside the small chapel which is called the House of St. Veronica, and then, bowed down by bitter disappointment, he again went on his way. He went through the whole of the street from station to station, waited with the same confidence for his release at the chapel that marks the spot where once stood the Gate of Righteousness, through which Jesus passed out of the town, as he did at the place where the Saviour spoke to the women of Jerusalem.

When he had thus gone through the Road of Christ's Sufferings, he began, searching restlessly, to wander through the town. In the narrow, crowded Street of David he was as great a hindrance to the traffic as were the heavily-laden camels, but no one called to or molested him.

Sometimes in his wanderings he chanced to enter the narrow courtyard of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. But here the poor cross-bearer did not lay down his burden, here he did not tear off his crown of thorns. As soon as his eye fell upon the dark gray wall, he turned away and fled. He was never to be seen at any of the gorgeous processions—not even at the great Paschal Miracle. The old penitent seemed to be convinced that this was the only place where it would be impossible to find what he was looking for.

But otherwise he always took care to meet the caravans that unloaded their wares at the Gate of Joppa. He sat and watched outside the hospices, and observed all the strangers with a searching gaze. After the railway between Joppa and Jerusalem had been opened he went almost every day to the railway-station. He went to see the Patriarchs and the Bishops at their residences, and every Friday he was to be found at the square in front of the Wall of Lamentation, where the Jews pressed against the cold stones, and wept over the palace which had been laid low, over the walls that had fallen, over the power that had vanished, over the prophets who were dead, over the priests who were gone astray, over the Kings who had despised Jehovah.

One beautiful summer day in August the man with the cross went out of the Gate of Damascus, and wandered about on the barren and lonely fields that surround the colony of the Gordonites. Whilst he thus laboriously dragged along his cross, his eye lighted upon a long train of waggons coming from the

railway-station and driving towards the colony. In these waggons were people with grave and solemn faces; many of them were plain, and had light hair with a reddish tinge, heavy eyelids, and projecting under-jaw.

When these people drove past the man with the cross, he did as he always did when he saw a new band of pilgrims entering Jerusalem: he rested the cross against his shoulder, his face lighted up, and he lifted his arms towards heaven.

When those who were in the waggons saw him, as he stood there with his cross, they started, but not from surprise. It was almost as if they had expected that this sight would be the very first they would see in Jerusalem. Several of them stood up, filled with sincere pity. They stretched out their arms. One could see that they would willingly have got down to help the old man to carry his burden.

Some of the colonists who were already well acquainted with Jerusalem said to the new-comers: 'It is a poor crazy man; he does like this every day. He thinks it is the Cross of Christ that he is carrying, and that he must carry it until he finds someone who is willing to bear the cross in his stead.'

Those in the waggons turned round and looked after the poor cross-bearer. As long as they could see him he was standing on the same spot, with his arms stretched out towards heaven, and with an expression of the highest exaltation on his face.

But it was the last time the old man with the cross was seen in Jerusalem. The lepers lying outside the gates waited the next day in vain for his coming. He no longer disturbed the mourners at the graveyards; he no longer troubled the door-keeper of the House of Caiaphas. The pious ladies of Zion no longer had an opportunity of giving him the loaf he was wont to fetch every day. The Turkish custodian of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre instinctively awaited his arrival and his flight, and the good water-carriers looked in vain for him in the crowded streets.

The poor old man was never again seen in the Holy City. No one knew whether he lay dead in his grotto on the Mount of Olives, or whether he had gone back to his home in the distant land. The only thing one knew for certain was that he no longer carried his heavy burden. For the morning after the arrival in Jerusalem of the Dalar peasants the Gordon colonists found the huge cross on the high steps outside their house.

## CHAPTER IV

### 'A CITY OF GOLD, LIKE UNTO CLEAR GLASS'

AMONGST the Swedish pilgrims was a smith, Berger Larsson by name. He had from the first been very happy about their journey. No one had found it so easy to leave his home as he had, and no one had looked forward more intensely to beholding the glory of Jerusalem than he.

But Berger was taken ill almost the same moment that he went on shore at Joppa. He had been sitting at the station in the glaring sun several hours before the train started, and he felt himself growing more and more unwell. When he got into the hot railway-carriage, his head began to ache intolerably, and when they reached Jerusalem he was so exhausted that Tims Halvor and Ljung Björn took him under the arms, and had almost to carry him on to the platform.

Bo had telegraphed from Joppa to inform the colonists about the arrival of the Dalar peasants. Several of the Swedish-Americans met the train, to greet their relatives and friends. But Berger was in such a high fever that he did not recognise his old townsfolk, although some of them had been his nearest neighbours. He understood, however, that he had arrived in Jerusalem, and the only thought in his mind seemed to be that he must keep up until he had seen the Holy City.

From the railway-station, which lies some distance outside Jerusalem, Berger could not see anything of the city. As long as he remained there he was lying perfectly still, with his eyes closed. But at last they were all seated in the carriages which were in waiting. They drove through the Valley of Hinnom, and from the top of the heights beyond it Jerusalem could be seen.

Berger lifted his heavy eyelids, and saw a city that was surrounded by towers and turrets. Behind the wall rose high domed buildings, and one or two palm-trees swayed in the mountain breeze.

But evening was drawing near, and the sun had sunk to the edge of the western hills. It was very big and red, and it shed a strong light over the whole firmament. The earth shone in red and golden colours. But to Berger it seemed as if the radiance which fell upon the earth did not come from the sun, but from the city on the hills above him. It proceeded from its walls, which shone like pure gold, and from its towers, which were roofed with clear glass.

Berger Larsson smiled when he saw two suns, one in the sky and one on the earth—God's city, Jerusalem. For a moment Berger felt as if joy had given him back his health; but almost immediately the fever again got the upper hand, and on the whole of the way to the house of the colony, which lay on the other side of the city, he was quite unconscious.

Nor was Berger any better during their reception at the colony. He was as little able to appreciate the great house as the white marble steps, or the beautiful gallery which surrounded the courtyard. He could not see Mrs. Gordon's fine and intelligent face when she came down the stairway to bid them welcome, or old Miss Hoggs, with the owl-like eyes, or any other of his new brothers and sisters. He did not even know that he was carried into a large, light room, which henceforth was to be the home of himself and his family, and where they hastened to make a bed ready for him.

He was no better the next day, but now and again he became conscious. But then he was troubled that he should die without having entered Jerusalem and seen its glories. He lay regretting this for two days. The fever increased, but even in his delirium he sorrowed over the thought that he should not be allowed to see the golden walls and the shining towers that surrounded God's own city.

His despair over this was so great that Ljung Björn and Tims Halvor took pity upon him, and made up their minds to satisfy him. They thought he would be better if his longing were appeased. They made a bier, and one evening, when the air was a little cooler, they carried him into Jerusalem. They took him along the mainroad into the city, and Berger lay quite conscious, gazing upon the stony soil and the bare hills. When they had come so far that they could see the city wall and the Gate of Damascus, they put down the bier, so that the sick man could enjoy the sight he had so longed for.

Berger did not say a word, but lay shading his eyes with his hand, straining his eyes to see. He saw nothing but a grayish-

brown wall, built of stone and clay, as are other walls. The large gate look weird and dreary, he thought, with its low entrance and its heavy battlements.

As he lay there weak and feeble, he got the idea that they had not brought him to the real Jerusalem. He had only two or three days ago seen another, which was as radiant as the sun itself.

'That my good friends and townfolk can have the heart to treat me like this!' thought the sick man—'that they should begrudge my seeing the real Jerusalem!'

His friends carried him down the steep slope leading to the gateway. It seemed to Berger as if they were carrying him down a deep precipice.

When Berger had passed through the gateway, he raised himself a little; he wanted to see if they had carried him into the Golden City.

Berger was strangely affected by seeing on all sides ugly gray walls, and still more so when he saw the mutilated beggars that sat by the gate, and the many filthy dogs lying in clusters of four or five on the top of the large heaps of rubbish.

He looked down upon the stones of the pavement; they were covered with a layer of dried-up dirt. He was surprised at all the cabbage-leaves and fruit-parings and all the refuse lying all over the street.

'I can't understand how Halvor could think of showing me such poor miserable streets,' he murmured to himself.

The men now carried Berger briskly into the city; they had already been there several times, and were quite able to tell the sick man about the places of interest they passed on their way.

'There is the house of the Rich Man,' said Halvor pointing to a building which to Berger appeared tumble-down and dilapidated.

They turned off into another street, that seemed to Berger as dark as if it had never seen a ray of sun. He lay gazing upon the arches that reached across the street, from house to house. 'Quite necessary, too,' he thought; 'if these miserable hovels were not properly supported they would soon fall down.'

'This is the Road of Christ's Sufferings,' said Halvor to Berger. 'It was here Jesus carried His cross.'

Berger lay pale and silent. The blood no longer rushed through his veins as earlier in the day; it was as if all circulation had stopped. He was as cold as ice. Wherever they brought him, he saw nothing but tumble-down walls and low gateways. He saw but few windows, and in those he saw the panes were all broken, and the holes were stopped with rags.

Again the men stopped with the bier. 'Here was the Palace of Pilate,' said Halvor; here it was that Pilate brought forth Jesus to the people, and said, 'Behold the Man!'

Berger Larsson beckoned to Halvor to come near him, and took him solemnly by the hand. 'Tell me the truth, Halvor; you must do so for the sake of our relationship,' he said. 'Do you mean to tell me that what you have shown me is the real Jerusalem?'

'Yes, truly it is,' answered Halvor.

'I am ill, and I may be dead to-morrow,' said Berger. 'Surely you can see that you have no right to deceive me?'

'No one thinks of deceiving you,' said Halvor.

Berger had hoped so earnestly that he would induce Halvor to tell him the truth. The tears came into his eyes at the thought that Halvor and the others could treat him like this.

Suddenly a happy thought came to him. 'They are only doing it to make my joy the greater when they carry me through the high gates of the city of honour and glory,' he thought. 'I will let them do as they like. They are doing it for the best. We Hellgumians have promised to deal with each other as brothers.'

The men went on carrying him through the dark streets. Some of them were canopied with large carpets that were full of rents and holes. When one passed under these carpets, one could hardly bear the darkness and the stench and the suffocating heat.

The next time the bier was stopped at the courtyard of a large gray building. The open space was full of beggars and vendors of rosaries, small pictures, and suchlike.

'This is the church which was built over our Saviour's grave and Golgotha,' said Halvor.

Berger Larsson looked up at the building with his dim eyes. It certainly had large gates and broad windows, and it was also of a good height. But Berger had never seen a church so crowded in between houses. And he saw neither spire, nor chancel, nor porch. No one should make him believe that this was a house of God. Neither could he believe that there could be so many vendors and dealers in the courtyard, if it were really the Sepulchre of Jesus. He knew well enough who it was who had driven out of the Temple those who sold doves, and overturned the tables of the money-changers.

'I see, I see,' said Berger, nodding to Halvor. But within himself he thought: 'What will be the next thing, I wonder?'

'I don't know whether you can bear any more to-day?' asked Halvor.

'I can stand it well enough, if only you can,' answered the sick man.

The men again took up the bier, and proceeded on their way. They now came to the southern part of the town.

The streets were very much the same as those they had already passed through, only they were filled with people. Halvor stopped at a by-street, and showed Berger some swarthy Bedouins with rifles across their shoulders, and with knives in their belts. He pointed out to him the half-naked water-carriers, who carried their pigskin water-bags on their backs. Halvor told him to look at the Russian priests, who wore their hair in a knot at the back like a woman; to notice the Mohammedan women, who looked like wandering spirits in their white garments, with a piece of black cloth over the face.

Berger grew more and more convinced that his friends were playing some strange trick upon him. These people certainly did not resemble the palm-bearers of peace that were to wander through the streets of the real Jerusalem. But when Berger was amongst this crowd of people his fever returned. Halvor and the others who carried the bier saw he grew worse and worse. His hands moved restlessly on the rug that was spread over him, and great drops of sweat stood on his forehead. But as soon as they spoke about turning back, he started up and said that it would kill him if they did not carry him far enough to see God's Holy City.

With words like these he urged them on until they reached the heights of Zion. When he saw the gate of Zion, he cried out that he wanted to be carried through it. He sat up on the bier in the certain expectation that beyond the wall he would find that glorious city of God for which his soul longed. But outside the gate he saw nothing but a sun-scorched and barren field that was covered with stones, ruined walls, and heaps of refuse. Near the gateway some poor miserable creatures sat huddled together. They dragged themselves towards the bier, stretching out their hands, the fingers of which had rotted away, to the sick man. They cried with voices which resembled the snarling of a dog; their faces were half eaten away, one had no nose, another no cheeks.

Berger screamed aloud in terror. Weak as he was, he began to cry from fear, bemoaning that they had carried him down into hell.

'It is only the lepers,' said Halvor. 'You know, Berger, that there are lepers in this country.'

They hastened, however, to bring him further up the hill, in order that he might not be pained by the sight of the poor wretches outside the gate.

Then Halvor put down the bier; he went up to the sick man and raised his head from the pillow. 'Now you must try and look up, Berger,' he said. 'From here you can see the Dead Sea and the Mountain of Moab.'

Berger once more raised his weary eyes. He looked down upon the lonely and wild mountain region east of Jerusalem. Far, far away in the distance gleamed the waters of a lake, and beyond that rose mountains, glorious blue mountains, edged with gold. It was all so beautiful, so airy, so transparent and radiant, that one could not believe that it belonged to this earth.

Berger raised himself on the bier in rapture; he tried to hasten towards the beautiful vision. He stumbled a few steps—then he fell back, powerless. The peasants thought at first that Berger was dead, but life was not yet extinct, and he lingered two days. But up to the very last he lay talking in his delirium of the real Jerusalem. He moaned that it grew more and more distant the more he strove to reach it, so that neither he nor any of the others would ever be able to enter the city.



## CHAPTER V

### GOD'S HOLY CITY, JERUSALEM

IN truth, everyone is not strong enough to live in Jerusalem. Even if they can stand the climate, and even if they escape infectious diseases, they sometimes succumb. The Holy City depresses and weighs upon them, or else they go out of their minds—ay, it can even kill them outright. One cannot live there for a week or two without hearing people say about this or that person who has suddenly died: 'Jerusalem has killed him.'

Those who hear this cannot help being greatly surprised. 'How can this be possible?' they ask. 'How can a city kill? These people cannot be in earnest.' And whilst wandering hither and thither in Jerusalem, one cannot help thinking: 'I should like to know what people mean when they say that Jerusalem kills. I should really like to know where that Jerusalem is which is so terrible that it kills men.'

Supposing one were to make up one's mind to take a walk round Jerusalem, one would probably leave the city by the Gate of Joppa. One would turn to the left, past the imposing square Tower of David, and continue one's walk along the narrow pathway running outside the city wall in the direction of the Gate of Zion. Just inside the wall lie the Turkish barracks, from where one hears the clanging of arms and military music. Then one would pass the large Armenian convent, which is also a fortification, with strong walls and gates, locked and barred. Further on one comes upon the heavy-looking gray building which is called David's Grave, and on seeing that it suddenly strikes one that one is standing on holy Zion, on the mountain of the Kings. And the thought comes to one that the mountain underneath is one huge arch, where King David sits in his golden mantle upon a throne of fire, still wielding the sceptre over Jerusalem and Palestine to this very day. One remembers that the remains of walls which cover the ground are ruins of what were once the

halls of Kings ; that the hill opposite is the Rock of Offence where Solomon sinned ; that the valley beneath, the deep Valley of Hinnom, was once filled to its very edge with the bodies of human beings who were killed in Jerusalem when the Romans destroyed the city.

A strange feeling comes over one as one walks there ; one fancies one hears the noise of battle, one sees great armies advancing to attack the walls of the city, one sees Kings approaching in their war-chariots. This is the Jerusalem of war, of strife, of violation, one thinks, and one is terrified at the thought of all the misdeeds and horrors that open out before one's mind.

Then a moment can come when one wonders if it should be this Jerusalem that causes men to die. But the next moment one shrugs one's shoulders, and says : 'It is impossible. It is much too long ago since the mighty swords met and the red blood flowed.' And one wanders on. But as soon as one has turned the corner of the wall and reached the eastern part of the city, one meets with something entirely different. One now comes to the holy places. Here one only thinks of ancient High Priests and the servants of the Temple. Inside the walls lies the burial-place of the Jews, where the Rabbins stand in their long red or blue velvet gowns weeping over the judgments of God. Here the mountain of Moriah rises with its magnificent Temple site. Outside it the ground slopes down to the Vale of Jehoshaphat, with all its sepulchres, and on the other side of the valley one sees Gethsemane and the Mount of Olives, from where Christ ascended into heaven ; and here one sees that pillar in the wall where Christ shall stand on the Day of Judgment, holding the one end of a long thread as fine as a hair, whilst Mohammed will stand on the Mount of Olives holding the other end. But the dead will be made to wander across the Valley of Jehoshaphat on this thread, and the righteous will safely reach the other side of the valley, but the wicked will be thrust into Gehenna's fire.

When walking there one thinks : 'Yes, this is the Jerusalem of death and judgment. Here both heaven and hell open their gates.' But one immediately says : 'No, it is not this Jerusalem, either, that kills. The trumpets of the Judgment Day are too far away, and the fire of Gehenna burns no more.'

Again one continues one's way along the city wall, and comes to the northern side of the city. Here it is barren, lonely, and monotonous. Here lies the naked hill which is probably the real Golgotha ; here is the grotto where Jeremiah wrote his Lamentations ; here, inside the wall, is the Pool of Bethesda ; here Via

**Dolorosa** winds its way beneath dark semi-arches. This is the Jerusalem of disconsolation, of suffering, of agony, of atonement.


One stops a moment, looking meditatively on the solemn and gloomy darkness. 'It is not this Jerusalem, either, that kills men,' one thinks, and wanders onwards.

But if one goes further towards the north-west and west, what a transformation! Here in the new part of the town, outside the city wall, rise the splendid palaces of the missionaries and the big hotels. Here is the large complex of the Russian buildings, church and hospital, and the immense caravansary capable of accommodating twenty thousand pilgrims; here consuls and priests build themselves fashionable villas; here the pilgrims wander about between shops that have only holy things for sale; here gardens and broad, airy streets are to be found; here carriages drive; here are banks and travel-bureaus.

On this side expand the important Jewish and German agricultural colonies. Here are the large convents, the manifold charitable institutions; here crowd monks and nuns, sick-nurses and sisters of charity, missionaries and Russian popes; here reside men of science, who study Jerusalem's past, and old English ladies, who can't live anywhere else; here are the splendid missionary schools, that give their pupils free education, and board and lodging and clothes, in order to gain an opportunity of winning their souls; here are the mission hospitals, where one simply begs the sick to come and be nursed that one may have a chance of converting them; here are held religious services and prayer-meetings where they fight for souls. Here it is where the Roman Catholic speaks evil of the Protestant, the Methodist of the Quaker, the Lutheran of the Reformed Church, the Russian of the Armenian; here envy sneaks about; here the fanatic looks askance at the worker of miracles; here the orthodox disputes with the heretic; here no mercy is shown; here one hates one's fellow-men to the glory of God. And here one finds what one has been looking for. This is the Jerusalem of soul-hunting, this is the Jerusalem of evil-speaking, this is the Jerusalem of lies, of slander, of jeers. Here one persecutes untiringly; here one murders without weapons. It is this Jerusalem which kills men.

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From the very day the Swedish brethren arrived in the Holy Land, all the members of the Gordon colony noticed a great change in the way in which people treated them. In the beginning it was only in little things. The English Methodist parson, for instance, avoided seeing them when he met them, and



the pious Sisters of Zion, who dwelt at the convent by the Ecce Homo Arch, stole across to the other side of the street, as if afraid of being contaminated by something hurtful if they came too near them.

The colonists never dreamt of taking this to heart; nor did they even try to find out why some American tourists, who had spent a whole evening at the colony talking to their countrymen, did not come again the next day, as had been arranged, and did not appear to know Mrs. Gordon and Miss Young when they afterwards met them in the street. But it was a more serious matter when some of the young women of the colony one day visited one of the large new shops at the Gate of Joppa, and were addressed by the Greek merchants in such a manner that, although they did not understand the words, the voice and the looks were enough to make them blush.

The colonists would fain have believed that all this was not done intentionally, or that some ill-natured report had been circulated about them in the Christian quarter of the city, but they thought it would soon pass over. The old Gordonites remembered that disagreeable rumours had several times before this got abroad about them. It had been said about them that they did not give their children a proper education; that they lived at the expense of a rich old widow lady, whom they had fleeced most unmercifully; that they allowed their sick to die without nursing them, because they would not interfere with what God had ordained; that they lived a life of indulgence and idleness, whilst they pretended to be working for the advancement of true Christianity. 'It is something of this kind that has come up again,' they said. 'But the slander will die away, as it has done before, because it has not a grain of truth in it.'

But then it happened that the Bethlehemite woman who came every day to sell fruit and vegetables suddenly ceased coming. They went to see her, to ask her to come as usual, but she told them straight out that she would never again sell them vegetables or beans.

There was no mistaking this. They understood now that something very bad must have been said about them. It was something that seemed to apply to all of them, and it had evidently been circulated all over the town.

It was not very long before they had further proof of this. Some of the Swedes were standing one day in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre when a number of Russian pilgrims entered the church. The good-natured Russians smiled and nodded to them;

they could see that they were peasants like themselves. But at the same moment a Greek priest went past, and he said some words to the pilgrims. They immediately made the sign of the cross, and shook their fists threateningly at the Swedes. It almost looked as if they meant to drive them out of the church.

Just outside Jerusalem there is a colony of German peasants who are sectarians. They had been in the Holy Land for many years. Both in their own country and in Palestine they had suffered much persecution, and people had tried to suppress them altogether. In spite of all this, things had gone so well with them that they had now large flourishing colonies at Caifa and Joppa, besides the one they had founded in Jerusalem.

One day one of these Germans came to Mrs. Gordon and told her that he had heard ill reports both of her and her followers. 'It is the missionaries over there,' he said, pointing to the western part of the city, 'who are saying these things about you. Had I not myself experienced that one can be perfectly innocent of that for which one is persecuted, I would not either sell you milk or meat. But I suppose they could not stand your having received so many new converts of late.'

Mrs. Gordon asked him of what people accused them.

'They say of you that you lead an immoral life; that you will not allow the members of the colony to marry, as God has ordained. Therefore they declare that everything here is not as it should be.'

The colonists at first would not believe him, but they soon saw that he had spoken the truth, and that everybody in Jerusalem believed that they led a shameful life. None of the Christians in Jerusalem would have anything to do with them. At the hotels the tourists were warned against them. Some of the visitors to Jerusalem ventured, however, to visit the colony now and again. When they returned they shook their heads mysteriously, and said that they had not noticed anything wrong, but, for all that, there might be many things going on which a stranger would never see.

The Americans, from the Consul right down to the humblest sick-nurse, were the worst of all towards the Gordonites. 'It is a shame for us Americans,' they said, 'that such people are not hounded out of Jerusalem.'

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The colonists were sensible enough to see that they would be obliged to let matters take their course. 'We cannot go from house to house, and tell everybody that we are innocent,' they

said. They comforted themselves with the thought that they stood by each other, and were united and happy. 'The sick and poor in Jerusalem have not yet begun to fight shy of us,' they said. 'We must let it blow over; it is a trial that God has sent us.'

At first the Swedes bore this slander very quietly. 'If they are so prejudiced against us that they think that we peasants have chosen the very town in which our Saviour died to lead a shameful life, then their opinion is not worth anything, and we need not trouble about what they think.'

And when people continued to treat them with contempt, they were happy at the thought that God counted them worthy to suffer persecution in the same place where Jesus had been mocked and crucified.

But one day in October a letter came to Gunhild, the daughter of the Chairman of the Parish Council. It was from her father; he wrote to tell her that her mother was dead. Her father did not upbraid her; he only wrote about her mother's illness and the funeral. One could see that the old man had meant to write kindly to her: he knew how unhappy this news would make her. The whole letter was written in the same gentle way to the very end, but when he had signed his name his suppressed anger had suddenly got the upper hand, he had dipped his pen hastily and deep down in the ink, and with big, thick letters he had written: 'Your mother might perhaps have got over her grief at your having gone away, but what she read in the *Missionary News* about the shameful life you all lead in Jerusalem killed her. People here did not expect that kind of thing either from you or from those in whose company you went away.'

Gunhild put the letter in her pocket, and did not speak to anybody about it the whole day. She did not doubt that her father had written the truth as to what had been the cause of her mother's death. Her parents had always been very jealous of their honour and of their reputation. She was like her parents in this respect; no one in the whole colony had suffered so much from being misjudged and talked about as she had. To her it was no comfort to know that she was innocent; she felt as if she were disgraced—felt as if she could not show herself amongst other people. She had for a long time gone about greatly troubled, and the malicious tongues had hurt her as a burning sore. And now they had killed her mother.

Gertrud and Gunhild shared the same room. They had always been the best of friends. But Gunhild did not even tell Gertrud

what her father had written. She thought it was wrong to spoil Gertrud's happiness at being in Jerusalem, where everything seemed to bring our Saviour nearer to her.

But all through the day Gunhild kept taking the letter out of her pocket and looking at it. She did not dare to read it. When she only looked at it her heart contracted with a bitter pain. 'If I could only die!' she thought. 'I can never be happy again. If I could only die!'

She sat looking at the letter. She felt that it contained a poison that would kill her, and she only hoped that it would not take too long, but soon be over.'

The next day Gunhild passed through the Gate of Damascus. She had been into the city, and was now on her way home to the house of the colony. It was exceedingly hot that day, as it often is towards the end of October, before the autumn rains have commenced. When Gunhild left the narrow streets, where houses and arches had protected her against the sun, she felt as if the bright sunshine struck her like a blow, and she was tempted to run back to the cool shadow of the arched gateway. It seemed to her that the sunny way she had before her looked dangerous. It was like crossing a rifle-range whilst the soldiers were firing.

Gunhild would not, however, turn back for the sake of a little sun. She had often heard that it might be dangerous, but she did not really give it a serious thought. She only did as one usually does when overtaken by a heavy shower: she raised her shoulders, pushed the kerchief she had round her neck higher up, and hurried home as fast as she could.

As she walked along she felt as if the sun had a fiery bow, and was shooting the one red-hot arrow after the other, and that it was the whole time aiming at her. The sun had, apparently, nothing else to do but to send arrows at her head. The fire seemed to hail down upon her, and it did not come from the heavens alone. Everything around her glowed and stung her in the eyes. Small sharp arrows came shooting up from the sparkling grains in the stones on the road. The green window-panes of a convent she passed flashed so that she dared not turn her eyes that way. The steel key in a door sent her a little malicious ray, and so did the bright leaves of a ricinus plant that appeared to have survived the summer heat solely in order to torment her. Wherever she looked, heavenwards or downwards, everything shone and glittered. It was not exactly the heat that caused her to suffer, although that was bad enough, but it was the

terrible white glare, which seemed to penetrate beyond her eyes, and burn right into her brain.

Gunhild felt as full of hatred and anger towards the sun as a poor, hunted animal does towards those who are pursuing it. She felt a strange inclination to turn round and look her persecutor straight in the face. For a while she resisted, but at last she turned round and looked at the sky.

Yes, there was the sun like a great bluish-white flame. Whilst Gunhild was gazing at it the sky grew quite black, and the sun shrank into a little spark with an evil and venomous lustre, and she thought she could see it unloose itself from its appointed place in the heavens, and come rushing down to strike her on the neck and kill her.

Gunhild shrieked. She put up her hand to protect her neck, and began to run. When she had run a little way down the road, where the white lime-dust whirled round her in a suffocating cloud, she discovered a large heap of stones. It was the ruins of a tumble-down house. She hastened thither, and was lucky enough to find an opening leading down into a cellar.

Gunhild came into a cool and soothing darkness. She could not see two steps before her. She stood with her back towards the entrance, and rested her eyes in the darkness. Nothing here shone or glittered. She could understand now how a poor fox would feel when it succeeded in getting into its hole when the huntsmen were after it. The heat and the dust, and the light, and the sunshine, now stood like cheated huntsmen outside her place of refuge. They all stood waiting outside with their glowing spears, but she was here in safety.

Gunhild's eyes by degrees became accustomed to the darkness. She saw a stone, and sat down upon it, waiting. She thought she would not be able to venture out from her cave for several hours—not before the sun had gone down so low in the west that it had lost its power in the heavens. But she had only been sitting a short time in the darkness before a thousand suns began to glitter before her eyes, and everything whirled round in her poor, overheated brain. A terrible dizziness came over her; it seemed to her as if the walls of the cellar went round in an endless whirl. She was so dizzy that she was obliged to lean against the wall in order not to fall down.

'O God, it pursues me here, too!' she cried. 'I must have done something wicked, as the sun wants to hurt me,' she continued.

The same moment she thought of the letter, of her mother's



death, of her great and terrible grief, and of her wish to die. All this had entirely vanished from her mind whilst she had been in danger ; then she had only thought of saving herself.

She quickly pulled out the letter, opened it, and went towards the entrance so that she could see to read it. Yes, there stood the words, exactly as she remembered them, and she groaned aloud. But almost immediately a thought came to her which seemed to soothe and comfort her. Don't you understand that God meant to let you slip away from this life ?

This she thought was very beautiful, and very merciful of God. She could not quite make it out, for her head was so confused. The dizziness had returned, the cellar whirled round, and a glittering streak of fire danced close to her one eye.

But still the thought clung to her that God was willing to let her leave this life, was willing to let her go to her mother in heaven, and be freed from all her sorrow.

She got up, put her hands behind her neck, but took them away again, and went out into the sun, very quietly, as if she were walking up the aisle in church. She had grown a little cooler. When she first came out she did not notice the huntsmen with their spears and red-hot arrows.

But she had not gone many steps before they were all after her again, as if they had come rushing out of ambush. Everything shone and glittered, and the sun came rushing down upon her like a sharp spark of fire, and struck her on the neck. She went another step or two. Then she fell to the ground as if struck by lightning.

Some of the people from the colony found her a few hours later. She lay with one hand pressed against her heart ; the other was stretched out grasping the letter, as if to show what it was that had killed her.

## CHAPTER VI

### ON THE WINGS OF THE MORNING

ON the day that Gunhild died from a sunstroke, Gertrud happened to be walking in one of the broad streets in the western suburb. She had gone out to buy some buttons and tape which she required for her sewing, but, as she did not know her way about very well, she was rather a long time before she found what she wanted. She did not hurry, either; she enjoyed being out. Gertrud had not yet seen much of Jerusalem. She had brought so few clothes with her from home that she had had to stay indoors and sew most of the time.

When she walked about Jerusalem there was always a happy smile upon her face. She could not help feeling the great heat and the glare of the sun, but it did not affect her as much as it did the others. With every step she took, the thought came to her that Jesus had walked in the same places where she now was walking. She was sure that His gaze had rested on the hills she saw in the distance. Dust and heat had tried Him as it now tried her, and when she thought of this, it brought Him so near to her, that she had no room for any other feeling than exceeding gladness.

What made Gertrud so infinitely happy after her arrival in Palestine was the thought that she had come so much nearer to Jesus. She never thought of two thousand years having passed away since He wandered about in this country with His disciples, but she went about with the happy feeling that He had lived there only a short time ago. She saw His footprints on the ground, and she heard the echo of His voice in the streets of Jerusalem.

As Gertrud went down the steep hill leading to the Gate of Joppa, she met a train of nearly two hundred Russian pilgrims. They had been walking about for several hours visiting the holy places in Jerusalem, and they were so tired and exhausted from the great heat that they looked as if they had hardly strength enough to crawl up to the Russian hospice on the top of the hill.

Gertrud stopped to look at them as they went past. They were all peasants, and she was surprised to see how much they resembled the people from her own country, in their wadmal coats and woollen vests. 'I am sure it is a whole little parish which has set out for Palestine,' she thought as she stood looking at them. 'The man there with the spectacles on his nose is the schoolmaster, and the man with the big stick has a large farm and rules the whole parish. The man who is walking there so stiff and straight is an old soldier, and that little fellow with the narrow shoulders and the long hands is the parish tailor.'

She stood there in a cheerful mood, and, just as in old times, made up small stories about those she saw. The old woman with the silk kerchief on her head is rich, she thought, but she has not been able to leave her home until she was getting old, for she had first to see about her sons and daughters getting married, and then she had to see about her grandchildren getting educated. And the other old woman who is walking next to her, and who is carrying a little bundle, is very poor. She is one of those who have had to work and stint all her life to get the money together for going to Jerusalem.

She could not help liking these pilgrims as she saw them wandering along. Although they were so hot and dusty, they looked happy and contented; one did not see a dissatisfied face amongst them. 'How good and patient they must be!' Gertrud thought; 'and how great must be their love for Jesus, since they are so happy walking in His land that they do not seem to feel any discomforts!'

At the end of the train were some who were so weak and exhausted that they were barely able to keep up. It was touching to see their relations and friends taking them under the arm and helping them up the hill.

Last of all walked a young girl of about seventeen. She was almost the only young person amongst them; the others were for the most part old or middle-aged. As soon as Gertrud saw her, she thought that this young girl must have had some great grief, which had made it impossible for her to remain at home. Perhaps she, too, had seen Jesus coming towards her in the forest to tell her to set out for Palestine.

The young girl looked ill and suffering. She was very slightly built, and her thick, heavy clothes, and more especially the clumsy boots which she and all the other women wore, apparently tired her greatly. She tottered a few steps, and then she stood still to take breath. She was in great danger of being knocked

down by a camel or run over by a carriage as she stood there motionless in the middle of the street.

Gertrud felt an irresistible inclination to help her. She did not stop to think, but went up to the poor girl, and placed her arm round her waist, in order to support her. The young girl looked up with heavy eyes. She almost unconsciously accepted Gertrud's help, and allowed herself to be dragged along a few steps.

At the same moment one of the older women turned round. She looked sharply at Gertrud, and called out something in a stern voice to the sick girl. The young girl appeared to be much frightened; she straightened herself, pushed Gertrud to one side, and tried to walk on alone, but was soon obliged to stop again.

Gertrud could not understand why the young girl would not accept her help. She thought it was because the Russians were very reticent, and would not receive assistance from a stranger. She again hastened to help the poor girl, and placed her arm round her waist. But a look of the greatest fright and horror came over the girl's face. Not only did she tear herself away from Gertrud, but she tried to strike her, and endeavoured to run in order to get away from her.

Then Gertrud saw that she was really afraid of her.

All at once it became clear to Gertrud that it was owing to the shameful slander which had been circulated about the Gordonites. Gertrud was both angry and grieved. The only thing she could do for the poor girl was to leave her alone, so as not to frighten her still more. But whilst she was standing looking after her, she saw that the girl in her fright and confusion ran against a cart which was coming down the hill at a great pace. Gertrud saw with horror that the Russian girl would certainly be run over and killed.

Gertrud wanted to close her eyes so as not to see the terrible sight; but she seemed to have lost all control over herself—she could not even shut her eyes. She stood with wide-open eyes and saw the horses run straight against the sick girl and knock her down. But the same instant the horses pulled up of themselves. They backed, put their fore-legs hard against the ground in order to resist the weight of the waggon, at the same time swerving deftly to one side and continuing their way, without a hoof or a wheel having touched the girl.

Gertrud thought that all danger was over. The young Russian girl remained lying on the ground without moving, but Gertrud supposed that she had fainted from fright.

People came running from all sides to help the poor girl.

Gertrud was the first to get to her, and stooped down to help her up. Then she saw that blood was flowing on to the gravel from a wound in her head, and that her face, which was turned upwards, grew strangely stiff. 'She is dead,' Gertrud thought, 'and it is I who am the cause of her death.'

At the same moment a man angrily thrust her aside. He shrieked out something to her, which she understood to mean that such a castaway as herself was not fit to touch such a pure young pilgrim. The same words were repeated by those around. Threatening hands were raised against her; she was pushed and buffeted out of the dense crowd which had gathered round the girl.

For a moment Gertrud was so angry at this treatment that she clenched her hands. She wanted to defend herself; she wanted to go to the Russian girl; she must find out whether she was really dead. 'It is not I who am unworthy to touch her; it is you!' she called out in Swedish. 'It is you who have killed her! It is your shameful slander that drove her to her death!'

No one understood her, and Gertrud's anger was soon changed into a deadly fright. Supposing anyone had seen how it all happened and told the pilgrims about it! Then all these people would turn upon her, and kill her without mercy.

She fled hurriedly from the place, running as fast as she could, although no one had attempted to follow her. She did not stop until she had reached the barren fields on the north side of Jerusalem.

Here she stopped, pressing her folded hands hard against her temples.

'My God! my God!' she cried. 'Have I become a murderer? Am I the cause of a fellow-creature's death?'

She turned towards the city, the high dark walls of which rose close to her. 'It is not I, but thou!' she cried. 'It is not I, but thou!'

Shuddering, she turned away from the city to go towards the house of the colonists, the roofs of which she could see in the distance. But she stopped time after time, trying to unravel all the thoughts which rushed through her brain.

When Gertrud came to Palestine, she had thought: 'Here I am in my Lord and King's own country; now I am under His special care; here no harm can come to me.' And she had comforted herself in the belief that Christ had commanded her to go to His Holy Land because He had seen that she had had such a great sorrow, that it was not necessary for her to suffer any more

in this life, but that she henceforth should live in peace and security.

But now Gertrud felt like one living in a strongly-fortified city, who suddenly sees its sheltering walls and towers fall to the ground. She saw that she was without any protection. Between her and all the wickedness that assailed her there was no bulwark. On the contrary, it seemed as if misfortune could strike her harder here than elsewhere.

She resolutely put away the thought from her that she was guilty of the young girl's death ; she would have no pangs of conscience on that account. But she had a vague fear of the harm this incident might do her. 'I am afraid I shall always be seeing those horses running right against her,' she moaned. 'I shall never be happy any more.'

A question arose in her mind which she also tried to put away from her, but which returned again and again. She began to wonder why Christ had sent her to this country. It was very wicked of her to question like this, but she could not help it. What had Christ meant by sending her to this country ?

'Oh, God!' she said in her despair, 'I thought that Thou lovedst me, and wouldst do for me what was best.'

When she got back to the colony everything seemed unusually solemn and silent. The lad who opened the gate looked very grave, and when she went into the courtyard it struck her how quietly they all walked about, and that no one spoke in a loud voice. 'Death must have come to this house,' she thought, before anyone had said a word to her.

She soon heard that Gunhild had been found lying dead on the roadside. She had already been brought home and placed on a bier in the cellar. Gertrud knew that the dead must be buried very quickly in the East, yet she was horrified when she found out that preparations for the funeral were already being made. Tims Halvor and Ljung Björn were already making the coffin, and one or two of the older women were dressing the body. Mrs. Gordon had gone to the manager of one of the American missions to ask permission to bury Gunhild in the American cemetery. Bo and Gabriel stood waiting in the courtyard, each with his spade, ready to go and dig the grave as soon as Mrs. Gordon returned.

Gertrud went into the cellar. She stood a long time looking at Gunhild, sobbing violently. She had always been very fond of her who now lay there dead, but whilst she stood looking at Gunhild she felt that neither she—Gertrud—nor anybody else had given

**Gunhild** all the love she had deserved. They had, no doubt, all known that she was honest and good and truthful, but she had made life a burden for herself, and perhaps for others, by attaching too much importance to trifles, and that had alienated people from her. Every time Gertrud thought of this she felt it had been very hard upon Gunhild, and her tears flowed afresh.

But suddenly Gertrud stopped crying, and she looked at Gunhild with fear and uneasiness. She noticed that Gunhild lay there with an expression in her face that she used to have when she was thinking about something difficult or complicated. It was strange to see her lying there as if she were thinking, with a deep furrow between her eyebrows, and with pouting lips.

Gertrud walked slowly away from the dead. By seeing this questioning look on Gunhild's face she was reminded of her own anxieties. She thought that Gunhild, as she lay there, was also wondering why Jesus had sent her to this land. 'Why should I have come here, if it were only to die?' she seemed to ask.

When Gertrud again entered the courtyard, Bo came up to her. He asked her to go and talk a little with Hök Gabriel Mattsson. Gertrud stood quite confused, and looked at Bo. She was so taken up with her own thoughts that she could not even understand what he wanted.

'It was Gabriel who found Gunhild by the roadside,' Bo added, by way of explanation.

Gertrud did not attend to what he was saying. She was only wondering why Gunhild had that expression on her face.

'It was dreadful for Gabriel to find her lying on the road, just as he was coming along without suspecting anything,' Bo went on; and as Gertrud still did not appear to understand what he said, he added, with deep emotion: 'If I were fond of anyone in the colony, and I found her lying dead by the roadside, I don't know what would become of me.'

Gertrud looked up, as if awakened from a dream. Yes, that was true; she knew long ago that Gabriel was fond of Gunhild. They were to have been married had it not been for the pilgrimage to Jerusalem. But they were both of one mind that they would go to Palestine, even if they should never then become husband and wife. And now Gabriel had found Gunhild lying dead by the roadside!

Gertrud went up to Gabriel, who stood motionless at the gate. He stood with compressed lips and with his eyes fixed, working his spade in and out between two stones. When Gertrud stood before him his lips moved, but no sound came.

'Gabriel would feel better if he could only cry,' Bo whispered to Gertrud.

Gertrud silently gave Gabriel her hand, as one always does to the nearest relatives at a funeral. Gabriel's hand lay cold and passive in hers.

'Bo says that it was you who found her,' Gertrud said. Gabriel still stood motionless. 'It was hard for you,' she continued, whilst Gabriel stood like a stone pillar. Gertrud at last realized what his grief must be. She understood how awful it must have been for him. 'But I think Gunhild would have been glad if she could have known that it would be you who would find her,' she went on.

Gabriel started. He lifted his eyes and looked at Gertrud. 'Do you think she was glad of that?'

'Yes,' said Gertrud. 'I can understand that it was hard for you; but I believe she would rather it had been you who found her than anyone else.'

'I never left her for a moment,' said Gabriel quietly, 'until some people came up who could help me, and I carried her gently and carefully.'

'I know you would,' Gertrud said.

Gabriel's lips trembled, and suddenly the tears rushed from his eyes. Bo and Gertrud stood silently beside him and let him cry. Gabriel leant his head against the door-post and sobbed violently.

By degrees he grew calmer. He went up to Gertrud and gave her his hand. 'Thank you for what you have said,' he murmured. His voice was now quiet and gentle. It almost sounded as if it were his father, old Høk Matts, who was speaking. 'I will show you something which I had not meant to show to anybody,' he continued. 'When I found Gunhild, she was lying with a letter in her hand. It was from her father, and I took it. I thought I had the greatest right to it. As you also have old parents at home, I think you ought to read it.'

Gertrud took the letter and read it. Then she looked at Gabriel. 'So that was the cause of her death,' she said.

Gabriel nodded. 'I think it was,' he said.

Gertrud almost screamed. 'Jerusalem! Jerusalem! thou wilt kill us all! I think God has forsaken us.'

At the same moment Mrs. Gordon came through the gate. She at once sent Gabriel and Bo to the burial-place. Gertrud went into the little chamber she had shared with Gunhild. She remained there alone the whole evening. She sat there filled



with a fear as great and as unconquerable as the fear of ghosts. She felt as if some other dreadful thing was going to happen that day. She was as frightened of it as if it were lying lurking in a corner. And at the same time she was tormented by doubt. 'I do not know why Christ has brought us hither,' she thought. 'We bring misfortune both on ourselves and others.'

For a little while she succeeded in driving away her doubts, but soon she found herself counting up all those upon whom the pilgrimage had brought misfortune. One could not imagine anything more certain or more sure than that it had been the will of God that they should go to Palestine. How was it, then, that this pilgrimage had only brought them misery?

She had taken out pen and paper in order to write to her parents, but she found she could not. 'What can I write to make them believe me?' she exclaimed. 'If I were to lie down and die, as Gunhild, they would perhaps believe me if I wrote that we were innocent.'

The day at last was at an end, and night came. Gertrud was so unhappy that she could not sleep. She saw Gunhild's face before her, and could not help asking herself over and over again what was troubling her dead friend. At last she felt quite certain that Gunhild had died with the same question on her lips as she herself was battling with.

Before the day dawned Gertrud got up and dressed herself to go out. This last day and night seemed to have taken her so far from Jesus that she scarcely knew how she would ever find the way home to Him again. Towards morning a longing came over her to find some place where she knew for certain He had walked when on earth, and the only place about which there never had been any dispute was the Mount of Olives. She thought if she went there she would come near to Him again, would feel herself overshadowed by His love, and understand what was His will with her.

At first when she went out into the dark she grew still more afraid. Again and again she seemed to live through all the misery and injustice which this one day had brought. But as she went higher up the mountain, things seemed to become clearer to her. The heavy burden was removed from off her shoulders. She thought she began to see the reason of it all.

This could be the only possible reason, she thought. When such injustice was allowed to have its sway, the Last Day must be close at hand. It was the only way in which one could understand how right became wrong, that God had no power to prevent

evil, that the righteous were persecuted, that lies prospered without gainsaying.

She stood still, meditating. Verily, this was the reason : the coming of our Lord was at hand, and she would soon see Him descending from the clouds of heaven. And if this were so, she could understand why they had all been called to Jerusalem. By the grace of God, she and her friends had been called to Jerusalem to meet Jesus. She clasped her hands in wonderment and joy when she thought how infinitely great was this mercy.

With quickened steps she hastened up the mountain until she reached its highest point, from whence Jesus ascended into heaven. She could not get into the enclosed part, but she remained standing outside, looking towards the sky, which was now lighted up by the sudden advent of dawn.

'Perhaps He will even come to-day,' she thought. She folded her hands, and looked towards the morning sky, which was covered with feathery clouds. The same moment the clouds were steeped in red, and it looked as if their reflection had tinged Gertrud's face. 'He is coming,' she said—'He is assuredly coming.'

She gazed at the dawn as though it were the first time she saw it. It seemed to her that she could see far into heaven. Right in the east she saw a deep arch, with high, wide gates, and she expected to see them flung open so that Jesus and all His angels could pass through.

Soon afterwards the gates of the east were opened, and the sun began its course in the heavens. Gertrud remained standing, motionless and expectant, whilst it shed its lustre over the mountain valley to the west of Jerusalem, where a range of mountain-peaks arose like waves on the sea. She stood still and waited until the sun had risen so high that its rays gilded the cross over the dome of the Church of the Sepulchre.

Gertrud thought she had once heard that Christ would come with the dawn on the wings of the morning. It became clear to her that He would not come on that day. But, still, she did not feel disheartened or uneasy. 'He will come to-morrow,' she said with confidence.

She went down the mountain, and went back to the colony, her face beaming with joy. But she spoke to no one about the great and glad expectation that filled her. The whole day she sat at her work as usual, and spoke about everyday matters.

The next morning she again stood on the Mount of Olives in the early dawn. And morning after morning she returned, for

she would be the first to see Jesus coming in the glory of the morning.

Gertrud's early morning wanderings soon attracted the attention of the colonists, and they begged her to desist. They told her that it might do them harm if people saw her every morning kneeling on the Mount of Olives, waiting for the coming of Christ. If she went on doing so, people would soon say that they must be out of their minds.

Gertrud tried to obey and remain at home. But in the early morning she awoke, and felt quite sure that just that very day Jesus would come. And then nothing could keep her from getting up and hastening to meet her Lord and Saviour.

This expectation had become a part of herself. She could not withstand it—could not free herself from it. In all other respects she was as she had been before. There was nothing the matter with her brain; the only difference in her was that she was happier and more gentle than before.

They became so accustomed to her morning wanderings that they allowed her to come and go without taking any exception to it. But when she went out in the morning she saw a dark shadow standing waiting in the gateway. When she went up the mountain she heard behind her a heavy footfall. She never spoke to this shadow, but she had a feeling of security when she heard these heavy footsteps following her.

Sometimes, when coming down the mountain, she ran straight against Bo, who stood leaning against a wall, waiting for her, with an expression of doglike faithfulness in his eyes. Bo reddened, and looked the other way, and Gertrud went on as if she had not seen him.

## CHAPTER VII

### BARAM PASHA

THE colonists were exceedingly pleased that they had been able to rent the beautiful large new house outside the Gate of Damascus. It was so big that it could nearly accommodate them all; only one or two families had been obliged to take rooms elsewhere. Besides, it was admirably arranged with terraces on the roof, and with open colonnades—welcome resorts in the summer heat. They could not help thinking that it was by God's special favour that a house like this was to be had just when they needed it. They often said that they would not have known what to do to insure the comfort and the unity of the community had they not been able to secure a house for themselves, but had had to live separately in different parts of the town.

It came about in this way: The house belonged to Baram Pasha, who was Governor of Jerusalem at the time. He had built this house about three years ago for his wife, whom he loved more than anything else in the world. He knew that he could not give her greater pleasure than by building a house large enough to hold the whole of his numerous household, and his sons and his daughters-in-law, and his daughters and their husbands, and all their children and servants.

But when the house was ready, and Baram Pasha and all his family had gone to live there, terrible trouble befell him. The first week he lived there one of his daughters died, the week after another daughter died, and the third week his beloved wife died. Then Baram Pasha was entirely overwhelmed with grief; he at once left his new palace, had it shut up, and swore that he would never put his foot in it again.

Since that time the house had been standing empty until the Gordon colony in the spring had asked Baram Pasha to allow them to rent the house. Everybody was very much surprised that he had given his consent, for they all thought that Baram

Pasha would never allow any human being to enter the gates of the palace.

But when in the autumn the ugly slanders about the Gordonites began to get abroad, several of the American missionaries consulted together as to how they could make these countrymen of theirs leave Jerusalem. They made up their minds that they would go to Baram Pasha and tell him about his tenants. And they did so. They told him all the bad things they had heard about them, and they asked him how he could allow such disgraceful people to live in the house he had built for his wife.

\* \* \* \* \*

It was one fine November day, about eight o'clock in the morning. The long night which had brooded over the city with its darkness had already vanished, and Jerusalem was about to resume its usual aspect. At the Gate of Damascus the beggars had already some time ago taken up their accustomed places, and the innumerable stray dogs that had prowled about all through the night now betook themselves to their resting-places on the dunghills. A small caravan had taken up their quarters just inside the gate the previous night. They were now making ready to resume their journey: the men were fastening the bales on to the kneeling camels, which groaned under the heaviness of their burden. Along the road peasants came hurrying towards the town with large baskets of vegetables. The shepherds, coming down from the mountains, passed solemnly under the archway, followed by large flocks of sheep which were to be slaughtered, and goats which were to be milked.

Just at the time when the gateway was most crowded, an old man came riding along on a fine white ass. He was attired very richly; he wore an under-garment of soft striped silk, and over it a long wide caftan of pale-blue brocade trimmed with fur. Both his turban and his belt were ornamented with rich embroideries of gold-coloured silk. His face must once have been both handsome and commanding. Now old age had put its stamp upon it; his eyes were blurred, the mouth had fallen in, and his long white beard was dry and stiff, and had a yellowish tinge at the point.

All those who were crowding the gateway looked with surprise at him, and asked each other: 'Why is Baram Pasha riding through the Gate of Damascus along the road which he would not allow his eyes to rest upon these three years?'

Others said: 'Will Baram Pasha ride to his house, which he has sworn never more to enter?'

Whilst Baram Pasha was riding through the crowd in the gateway, he said to his servant Machmud, who accompanied him: 'Dost thou hear, Machmud, all the people we meet are surprised, and are asking each other: "What is the matter? Will Baram Pasha ride to his house, which he has not seen for three years?"'

And his servant answered that he did hear people were surprised.

Then said Baram Pasha in great anger: 'Dost thou, then, think that I am so old that they can do with me what they like? Dost thou think that I will put up with these foreigners leading a shameful life in the house I built for my wife, who was a good and pious woman?'

Baram Pasha's servant tried to allay his master's anger, and said: 'Master, thou forgettest that it is not the first time thou hast heard the Christians lie about each other?'

Baram Pasha lifted his arms in his anger, and exclaimed: 'Flute-players and dancing-girls abide in the house where my dear ones died! Before the day has come to an end these evil-doers shall be cast out of my house.'

As the old Pasha said these words, he and his servant met a little flock of school-children, who came briskly walking down the road, two and two. And when the Pasha saw them, it struck him how unlike they were to all the other children who played about the streets of Jerusalem: for they were clean, their clothes were decent, their shoes strong, and their hair was fair and smooth.

Baram Pasha pulled up his ass, and said to his servant: 'Go and ask them who they are.'

But his servant answered: 'I need not ask them who they are, for I see them here every day. They are the children belonging to the Gordon colony, and they are on their way to the school which their people have started in the town in the old place where they lived before they rented thy big house.'

Whilst the Pasha was sitting still and looking after the children, two men, who also belonged to the colony, came along drawing a cart, in which the smallest of the school-children were sitting, those who were not old enough to walk the long distance into the town; and the Pasha saw that the little ones clapped their hands with pleasure over their ride, and those who drew the cart laughed to them, and ran faster to amuse them.

Then his servant took courage, and said: 'Dost thou not think, master, that these children must have good parents?'

But Baram Pasha was an old man, and obstinate in his anger, as old people generally are. 'I have heard what their own

countrymen say about them,' he answered; 'and I tell thee that before night they shall be driven out of my house.'

When Baram Pasha had ridden some distance, he met a number of women in European dress walking towards the town. They walked very quietly and sedately; their clothes were plain, and in their hands they carried heavy well-filled baskets.

Then the Pasha turned to his servant, and said to him: 'Go and ask them who they are.'

And his servant answered: 'I do not need to ask, master, for I meet them here every day. They are the women of the Gordon colony on their way to Jerusalem with medicine and food for the sick who are too ill to go to the colony for help.'

Baram Pasha answered: 'Even if they hide their sins under angels' wings, I will drive them out of my house.'

He rode on in the direction of the big house, and as he approached it he heard the hum of many voices, and now and again a loud cry.

He turned to his servant, and said: 'Listen to the noise the musicians and dancing-girls are making in my house!'

But when he turned the corner he saw a great number of people, sick and full of sores, sitting huddled together in front of the entrance to the house. They were talking with each other about their sufferings, and some of them were moaning loudly. And Machmud, his servant, took courage, and said: 'These are the musicians and dancing-girls that thou heardest making such a noise in thy house. These people come here every day to consult the physicians of the Gordon colony, and to have their sores dressed by their sick-nurses.'

Baram Pasha answered: 'I see these Gordonites have bewitched thee, but I am too old to be deceived by their lies. I tell thee, if I had the power, I would hang every one of them from the balcony round my house.' And Baram Pasha was still in a state of great agitation when he dismounted and went up the steps.

When the old man entered the courtyard, a tall, stately woman came towards him and bowed. Her hair was white, although she did not look to be more than forty years old. Her face was clever and full of authority, and although she only wore a plain black gown, it was easy to see that she was accustomed to rule over many people.

Baram Pasha turned towards Machmud, and said to him: 'This woman looks as wise and as good as Kadidscha, the wife of the Prophet. What is she doing in this house?'

And Machmud, his servant, answered him : ' It is Mrs. Gordon who has been the head of the colony since her husband died six months ago.'

Then the old man's anger rose again, and he said to Machmud in a hard voice : ' Tell her I am come to turn her and her people out of my house.'

But his servant said to him : ' Will the just Baram Pasha turn these Christians out before he has himself seen in what their crime consists? Would it not be better, master, if thou saidst to these women, " I have come hither to inspect my house " ? and if thou shouldst then find that they are leading the life the missionaries have made thee believe that they do, then say to her, " Thou shalt leave this house, for in the place where my dear ones died no abomination shall be tolerated."'

Then Baram Pasha answered : ' Tell her that I will inspect my house.'

Machmud told Mrs. Gordon what his master said, and she answered : ' It is a pleasure to us to show Baram Pasha how we have arranged his house.'

Then Mrs. Gordon sent for Miss Young, who had lived in Jerusalem since her childhood, and spoke Arabic like a native, and asked her to show Baram Pasha the house.

Baram Pasha took the arm of Machmud, his servant, and followed her. As he insisted upon seeing the whole house, Miss Young first took him down to the cellar, to the laundry. Here she showed him with much pride the large piles of newly-washed clothes, the splendid large boilers and tubs, and the busy laundresses at their washing-tubs and ironing-boards.

The bakery was next to the laundry. And Miss Young said to Baram Pasha : ' Look what a splendid oven some of our brethren have built for us, and what excellent bread we can make.'

From the bakery he was taken to the joiners' shop, where a couple of old men were working. And Miss Young showed Baram Pasha some plain chairs and tables which they had made.

' Oh, Machmud, I am afraid these people are too deep for me,' the old Pasha said in Turkish, which he did not expect Miss Young to understand. ' They have suspected something, they have had their spies out, who must have told them I was coming. I had expected to find them drinking and throwing dice. And now I find them all working.'

Baram Pasha was taken through the kitchen and the sewing-room, and they then came to a room the door of which was



opened with a certain ceremony. It was the weaving-room, where the looms rattled, and where both the spinning-wheels and the carding were in full swing.

Then Baram Pasha's servant took courage, and asked his master to observe the firm, strong cloth they were making. 'Master,' he said, 'this is not flimsy material for dancing-girls or airy drapery for frivolous women.'

Baram Pasha was silent and went on. Everywhere he went he saw people with clever, honest faces. They were all sitting silently and seriously at their work, but when he entered a room a friendly smile lightened up their faces.

'I am telling them,' Miss Young said to Baram Pasha, 'that you are the good Governor, who has given us leave to live in this splendid big house, and they ask me to thank you for having been so good to us.'

But Baram Pasha the whole time had a harsh, angry look on his face, and did not answer Miss Young. She began to be afraid, and thought to herself: 'Why does he not speak to me? does he mean to do us any harm?'

She conducted Baram Pasha through the long narrow dining-rooms, where they were busy taking the cloths off the tables, and washing up after the morning meal. Here, too, he saw nothing but the greatest orderliness and frugality.

But his servant Machmud once more took courage, and said to him: 'Master, how is it possible that these people, who bake their own bread and sew their own clothes, can at night be transformed into flute-players and dancers?'

Baram Pasha could not answer him.

And the Pasha went through all the rooms in his house. He went to the large sleeping-room for the unmarried men, and saw their plain, clean beds. He went to the rooms of the different families where the parents lived with their children. Everywhere he found well-scoured floors, white bed-hangings, neat light-painted furniture with check cotton covers, and home-woven carpets.

But Baram Pasha's face grew darker and darker, and he said to Machmud: 'These Christians are too deep for me. They understand too well how to conceal their sinful life. I had expected to find the floor covered with cigar-ash and fruit-parings; I thought I should see the women sitting gossiping, whilst they smoked their water-pipes or painted their nails.'

At last he ascended the beautiful white marble staircase leading to the large meeting-room. It had been the Pasha's reception-room, but now it was arranged in American fashion, with comfort-

able chairs round the tables, on which were books and periodicals, and here and there on the light walls hung photographs.

Here they were again received by Mrs. Gordon, and Baram Pasha said to his servant: 'Tell her that before night she and her followers must have quitted this house.'

But Machmud, Baram Pasha's servant, answered him: 'Master, one of these women can speak thine own language. Let her hear what is thy will from thine own lips.'

Then Baram Pasha raised his eyes, and looked at Miss Young, and she met his glance with a gentle smile. And Baram Pasha turned from her, and said to his servant: 'I have never seen a face which the Almighty has endowed with greater purity and beauty; I cannot tell her that she and her friends give themselves up to sin and wickedness.'

And Baram Pasha sank down on a chair and hid his face in his hands, whilst he tried to make out which was true, what he had heard or what he had seen.

At that moment the door opened, and a poor old pilgrim entered the room. He wore a shabby gray mantle, and his legs were bound up in rags. On his head was a dirty turban, the green colour of which denoted him to be a descendant of the Prophet.

Without noticing the Pasha, the man went and sat down on a chair a little apart from the others; he was allowed to do this without anyone asking him what his business was.

'Who is that man, and what does he want here?' asked Baram Pasha, turning to Miss Young.

'We do not know him,' answered Miss Young; 'he has never been here before. You must not take it ill that he has come here. Our house stands open for everyone who wishes to take refuge here.'

'Machmud,' said the Pasha to his servant, 'go and ask this pilgrim, who is a descendant of the Prophet, what he has got to do with these Christians.'

Machmud did as he was bid, and came back to the Pasha.

'He says that he has nothing to do here, but he would not go past without coming inside, because it is written: "Let not thy feet sin when thou goest past the dwelling of the righteous."'

Baram Pasha sat silent for a long time. 'Thou canst not have heard aright,' he said to his servant. 'Ask him once more what is his errand in this house.'

Machmud did as he was bid. He came back to the Pasha, and repeated word for word the same answer.

'Then let us thank God, friend Machmud,' said Baram Pasha

quietly and gently, 'that He has sent this man to enlighten us. He has turned his feet hither that my eyes might be opened to the truth. We will now ride home, friend Machmud, and I will not turn these Christians out of their home.'

Shortly afterwards Baram Pasha rode away from the colony ; but an hour later Machmud came back again, leading the Pasha's beautiful white ass by the rein. He brought it to the colonists as a gift from Baram Pasha, with the message that the Pasha wished it to be used for driving the little children to school in the morning.

## CHAPTER VIII

### FLOWERS FROM PALESTINE

It is towards the end of February. The winter rains are over, and spring has come. But things are not yet very forward. The buds of the fig-trees have not yet begun to swell, the leaves have not yet begun to creep out of the blackish-brown vine, and the large flower clusters of the orange-trees have not yet opened out.

But what have ventured out at this early season are the little flowers of the fields. Wherever one turns one sees flowers. Large fiery-red anemones cover all the stony slopes ; in all the crevices of the rocks grow violet cyclamen ; over all the fields are spread the small meadow-pinks and daisies, and every copse is crowded with crocuses and cowslips.

And just as in other countries one goes out gathering berries and fruit, in Palestine one goes out gathering flowers. From all the convents, from all the mission-stations, they go out flower-gathering. Poor members of the Jewish colony, European tourists, and Syrian labourers meet in the wild rocky valleys carrying flower-baskets. And in the evening all these flower-gatherers return, laden with anemones and hyacinths, with violets and tulips, with narcissi and orchids.

In the courtyards of the innumerable convents and hospices of the Holy City stand huge stone basins, in which the spring flowers are placed in water, and in cells and rooms busy hands are occupied in spreading out the flowers on large sheets of paper for the purpose of pressing them.

But as soon as the small anemones and hyacinths are well pressed and dried, they are arranged in small bouquets and large bouquets, and in devices pretty and not pretty, and fastened on to cards, or in small albums with covers of olive-wood, upon which is painted 'Flowers from Palestine.'

And soon all these flowers from Hebron, flowers from the Mount of Olives, flowers from Jericho, go out into the world.

They are sold in shops, they are sent in letters, given away as keepsakes, exchanged for gifts of charity. Further than India's pearls, and silk from Brussa, wander these little field-flowers, the only wealth of the poor Holy Land.

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It was a fine spring morning. They were very busy at the Gordon colony; everybody was getting ready to go out flower-gathering. The children, who were to be free from school the whole day, ran about, wild with delight, begging everybody to lend them baskets to put the flowers in. The women had been up since four o'clock in the morning to get the food ready, and even up to the last moment they were busy in the kitchen with the wafer-irons and the preserve-jars. Some of the men were packing sandwiches and bottles of milk, cold meat and bread, in the knapsacks. Others provided themselves with large water-bottles, and baskets with tea-kettles and cups. At last the gate was opened; the children stormed out first, and all the others followed in large and small groups as they liked. No one remained at home. The big house was soon quite empty.

Bo Ingmar Mansson was exceedingly happy that day. He had managed to arrange to walk by Gertrud's side, so that he could help her with all she had to carry. Gertrud's kerchief was drawn so far over her forehead that Bo could only see her chin and her soft, fair cheek. He smiled to himself that he could be so happy simply because he was walking by Gertrud's side, although he could neither see her face nor speak with her. Karin Ingmarsdotter and her sisters were walking just behind them. They began to sing a morning hymn which they had been accustomed to sing with their mother at Ingmars' Farm when they sat at their spinning-wheels in the early morning.

Bo knew quite well the old hymn:

'The blessed day which now we see  
To us from heaven descending.'

In front of Bo walked old Corporal Fält. He had, as was now always the case, all the children around him. They held fast to his stick and his coat-tails. Bo, who could remember the time when the children ran away if only they caught a glimpse of him, thought to himself: 'I have never seen him look so fierce and so straight as he does now. He is so proud because the children keep by him that his moustache simply bristles, and I verily believe his nose is even more hooked than it used to be.'

In the midst of the party Bo saw Hellgum, who was walking,

holding his wife by the one hand, and his pretty little daughter by the other. 'It is strange that Hellgum, thought Bo, 'seems to be so much in the background since we have joined the Americans, although it could not very well be otherwise; for they are such splendid people and have such a wonderful gift for explaining the Word of God. I wonder what he really thinks now that he sees no one flocking round him on a day like this? But his wife, at any rate, is glad that she has him a little more to herself; one can easily see that from her manner and her looks. She has never in her life been so proud and happy.'

In the very front of the party walked pretty Miss Young. By her side walked a young Englishman, who had joined the colony a year or two ago. Bo knew as well as all the others that the young man loved Miss Young, and that he had joined the colony in the hope of her becoming his wife. There was no doubt, either, of the young girl being fond of him; but the Gordonites would not allow any exception to be made in their stringent rules for her sake, and the two young people had already lived two years in this way without any hopes with regard to the future. To-day they walked by each other's side, spoke only to each other, and had eyes for no one else. And as they walked in advance of the others, with light and buoyant step, it looked as if they would fly away and leave all the others behind, and go out into the wide world, and for once live their own life.

But walking behind all the rest Bo saw Gabriel. There was at the colony a French sailor who had been there from the very beginning. He was so old and weak that Gabriel had taken him by the arm, and was helping him up the many steep slopes. 'Gabriel is thinking of his old father,' Bo thought.

Their road at first went towards the east, through a lonely and wild mountain-path. There were no flowers, and the earth was washed away from the steep slopes; everywhere one saw naked yellowish-gray rock.

'It is strange,' thought Bo: 'I have never before seen a sky as clear as the one above these yellow mountains; and although these rocks are so bare, they are not ugly. When I see how prettily rounded they are, I cannot help thinking of the large domes that rise above the churches and houses in this country.'

When the colonists had been walking for about an hour, they discovered the first valley covered with red anemones. With cries of joy they hurried down the mountain-side, and eagerly began to pluck the flowers. They went on gathering anemones, until soon after they came upon a second valley, which was full

of violets, and then a third, in which grew every kind of spring flower.

In the beginning the Swedes were almost too eager; they simply tore up the flowers. But then the Americans came and showed them how they ought to do it. They said they must pick and choose, and only pluck those flowers which were suitable for pressing. It was work that must be done carefully.

Bo walked by the side of Gertrud, gathering flowers. Once when he stood up to straighten his back, he saw close to him two of the largest farmers from home, who for many years had probably never looked at a flower, plucking away as eagerly as the others. Bo could hardly help laughing.

Suddenly Bo turned towards Gertrud, and said to her: 'As I walk here I cannot help thinking about what Christ meant when he said: "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven."'

Gertrud raised her head and looked at Bo. It was so unusual for him to speak to her. 'They are strange words,' she said.

'I have noticed,' Bo said thoughtfully, 'that children are never so good as when they are playing at being grown up. They are never so quiet as when they are ploughing a field they have made in the middle of the highroad, or when they crack their whip of string, and urge on their horses, and make a tremendous dust with a branch of fir. They are so amusing and sweet when they talk about trying to get through with their sowing before their neighbour, or complain that they never ploughed a field with so many stones in it.'

Gertrud walked along with her head down, plucking flowers. She made no answer; she did not quite understand what Bo was driving at.

'I can distinctly remember,' continued Bo, in the same grave voice, 'how I enjoyed myself once when I had made a cowshed of wooden blocks, and put fir-cones in it for cows. Every morning and every evening I was most particular to give the cows new-mown hay; and sometimes I played that it was spring, and that I had to drive the cows to the säter. Then I blew the horn, and called so loudly for Star and Golden Lily that I could be heard all over the farm. And I often talked with my mother about how much milk my cows gave, and how much I might expect to get for my butter at the dairy. I also took care to put a board over the eyes of the bull, and when people came past I shouted to them that they must take care, for the bull was a bit malicious.'

Gertrud was now plucking less eagerly. She was listening attentively to Bo, and could not help wondering that he also should be taken up with the same kind of thoughts and fancies that filled her own mind.

'But the most amusing of all was when we boys played at being old men, and held a parish meeting,' continued Bo. 'I remember that I and my brothers and two other boys used to climb on to a pile of boards which for several years had been lying in the yard. The one who was chairman hammered with a wooden spoon on the boards to call attention, and we others sat solemnly around him, and voted who in the parish should have relief from the poor-box, and how much each man in the town should pay in rates. We sat with our thumbs in the armholes of our waistcoats, and spoke with thick voices, as if our mouths were full of porridge, and we never addressed each other except as bailiff, schoolmaster, churchwarden, and chairman.'

Bo was silent, and stroked his forehead, as if he had now come to what he really wanted to say. Gertrud had now quite given up plucking flowers. She was sitting on the ground, and had pushed her kerchief back, and she looked at Bo as if she expected to hear something new and wonderful.

'Don't you think,' said Bo, 'that, in the same way as it is good for children to play at being grown-up, it may also be good for grown-up people sometimes to become like children again? When I look at these old men, who at this time of the year have always been accustomed to be about in the wild forest, working hard at cutting fire-wood or carrying timber, going here intent upon plucking flowers just like children, then it seems to me that we are on the way towards following the words of Jesus—being converted, and becoming like little children.'

Bo saw that Gertrud's eyes beamed. She understood now what he meant, and the thought made her happy. 'I think we have all become like little children since we came to this land,' she said.

'Yes,' said Bo. 'We have in any case become like little children in this: that we have had to learn both in one way and another. We have, for instance, had to learn how to hold our knife and fork, and also to eat food we had never tasted before. And it seemed very childlike that, to begin with, we were obliged to have someone to go out with us, as we could not otherwise have found our way home again, and that we were warned against people who might do us harm, and against places where we were not allowed to go.'



'We who came from Sweden were quite like little children. First of all we had to learn to speak,' said Gertrud. 'We were obliged to ask the names of everything—of table and chair, of cupboard and bed. And now, I suppose, we shall soon have to go to school to learn to write our new language.'

They both grew quite eager in trying to find fresh instances of similarity.

'I have had to learn the names of flowers and trees, just as my mother taught me when I was little,' said Bo. 'I have learnt to know a peach from an apricot, and the knotty fig-tree from the twisted olive-tree. I have learnt that one can know a Turk by his short jacket, and a Bedouin by his striped mantle, and a dervish by his felt cap, and a Jew by his small corkscrew curls at the ears.'

'Yes,' Gertrud said, 'it is exactly the same as when we in our childhood learnt to know the Floda peasants and the Gagnef peasants from each other by their different coats and hats.'

'The most childlike of it all is, I think, that we let the others altogether manage for us,' said Bo, 'and that we have no money of our own, but have to ask others for every penny we want to spend. Every time a fruit-vendor offers me an orange or a bunch of grapes, I remember how I felt in my childhood when I was at the fair and was obliged to go past the gingerbread-stall because I hadn't a penny in my pocket.'

'I think we have been completely transformed,' said Gertrud. 'If we went back to Sweden, I think they would hardly know us again.'

'How can we help thinking that we have become like children again, when we go and dig in a potato-field no bigger than a barn floor,' said Bo, 'and afterwards plough it with a plough made of a branch; and only have a little ass to pull the carriage when we go out driving; and have no proper farming to do, but only play with a little vine-growing?'

Bo closed his eyes in order better to think. It suddenly struck Gertrud that he looked remarkably like Ingmar Ingmarsson, his whole face had such a clever and thoughtful expression.

'But, after all, this is not the most important,' said Bo, after a pause. 'The most important of all, I think, is that we have learnt to think of our fellow-men in a childlike way—that we are beginning to believe that everyone wishes us well, and that in spite of some of them being hard enough upon us.'

'Yes, I think it was more the mind Christ was thinking of when He said those words,' Gertrud agreed.

'But one's mind has been changed,' answered Bo—'that it has. Have you not noticed that now, when we have some heavy trouble, we do not go brooding over it for days and weeks, but we forget all about it in a short time?'

Just as Bo said this the others called to them that they were to come to breakfast. Bo was quite sorry. He could have gone on walking with Gertrud and talking with her the whole day without giving breakfast a thought. In any case, he felt such a restfulness and contentment over him that he thought: 'The colonists are right when they say that people need only live in peace and unity, as we do, to be happy. I for one am quite satisfied with things as they are. I do not now desire to make Gertrud my wife; I no longer feel that restless craving for her that I had in bygone days; I am quite happy and satisfied if I can only be a little with her now and again.'

He would have liked to have told Gertrud that he was quite changed, that he felt like a child also in this respect; but he was too bashful, he could not find the right words. He walked along pondering over it the whole way home. He felt as if he must tell Gertrud how altered he was, so that she might feel more comfortable in his company, and rely upon him as upon a brother.

They got back to the colony just as the sun was setting. Bo went and sat down under an old sycamore-tree outside the entrance to the house; he wanted to remain in the fresh air as long as possible. When all the others had gone in, Gertrud went up to him, and asked if he would not come in too.

'I am sitting here thinking of what we were talking about this morning,' said Bo. 'I am wondering what would happen if Christ came walking along the road as He, no doubt, often did when on earth, and came and sat down next to me under this tree, and said to me: "Unless ye become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven."'

Bo sat talking in a dreamy voice, as if he were thinking aloud. Gertrud stood silent and listened.

'Then I would answer Him and say,' Bo continued, '"Lord, we help each other without asking for reward, just as children do; and if we get angry with each other, it is not for a lifetime, but we become good friends again before the sun goes down. Dost Thou not see, Lord, that we are like children?"'

'What do you think Christ would answer?' said Gertrud in a gentle voice.

'He would not answer anything,' said Bo. 'He would sit quite still, and look at me, and again say: "Ye shall become as

little children, if ye will enter My kingdom." And I would say to Him just as I said before: "Lord, we love everybody, just as children do. We do not make any difference between Jew and Armenian, between Bedouin and Turk, between black and white. We love the wise and the simple, high and low, and we divide our goods evenly between Christians and Mohammedans. Is it not so, Lord, that we have become as little children, and can enter Thy kingdom?"

'What would Christ answer?' Gertrud asked again.

'He would not make any answer,' said Bo. 'He would remain sitting under the tree, and say very gently: "Unless ye become as little children, ye cannot enter My kingdom." And then I understand what He means, and I say to Him: "Lord, also in this have I become as a little child: I no longer feel the same love as in bygone days, but my beloved is to me like a playmate and a sister, with whom I walk in the fields, gathering flowers. Lord, have I not then——"'

Bo suddenly stopped, for at the same moment he uttered these words he felt that they were a lie. It was to him as if Christ really stood before him and looked into his very soul. And Bo thought that Jesus must be able to see how his love rose within him, rending and tearing his heart like a wild beast, because he would deny it in the presence of his beloved.

Bo, in the deepest agitation, covered his face with his hands, whilst he groaned out the words: 'No, Lord, I am not as a little child, and I cannot enter into Thy kingdom. Perhaps the others can, but I cannot quench the fire in my heart or the life in my body. For I love with a fervent desire, such as a child cannot. But if it be Thy will, Lord, this fire shall continue to consume me until the end of my life, without my seeking solace for my longings.'

Bo sat long under the tree, weeping, overcome by his love. When at last he looked up, Gertrud was gone.

## CHAPTER IX

### GEHENNA

OUTSIDE the walls of Jerusalem, on the southern slope of Mount Zion, one of the large American missionary societies had their burial-place, and here the Gordon colony had obtained permission to bury their dead. There were already not a few of them lying there, from little Jacques Garnier, who had been cabin-boy on board the large steamer *L'Univers*, and who was the first of the Gordonites to die, to Richard Gordon himself, who had died in the spring, soon after his return from America.

It was the poorest and the plainest burial-ground one could imagine. It consisted of only a small piece of ground, surrounded by a wall that was so high and so thick that it would have been suitable for a fortress. There were neither trees nor grass; all they had done was to clear away the stones and the débris so that the ground was tolerably even. Over the graves they had placed slabs of limestone, of which there were more than enough to be had about Jerusalem, and by the sides of some of the graves were placed green-painted chairs and seats.

Down in the east corner, where one could have had a fine view of Moab's beautiful mountains, if it had not been for the wall, were the Swedish graves. There were already so many of them that it seemed as if our Lord thought that they had done enough for Him by leaving their homes, and that He did not require them to do more in order to enter His kingdom. Here lay Berger Larsson, the smith, and Ljung Björn's little son Erik, and Gunhild, and Brita Ingmarsdotter, who had died from small-pox shortly after the happy day when the colonists had been out gathering flowers. There lay also Per Gunnarsson and Märta Eskilsdotter, that had belonged to Hellgum's community in America. Death had been so busy amongst them that the colonists felt as if they had already taken up too much of the ground.

Tims Halvor Halvorsson had also one of his children lying in

the cemetery. It was the youngest of his daughters, a little girl, who was only three years old when she died. He had been passionately fond of her, and she was the one who most resembled him. It seemed to him that he had never felt so much for any human being as he did for that little child. He could not get over her death. No matter what he did, his thoughts were always with her.

Perhaps if she had died at home in Dalarne, and been buried in their own churchyard, it might not have had such an effect upon him ; but now it always seemed to him that his little daughter must feel so lonely and deserted out there in that dreadful cemetery. Every night he seemed to see her before him ; she sat on her little gravestone and cried, and said she was so cold and so afraid of the dark and of the strange place.

One afternoon Halvor went down to the Valley of Jehoshaphat, and plucked a quantity of red anemones, the prettiest he could find, to put upon her grave. As he was walking along the green fields of the valley, he thought : ' Ah, if only I had my little girl here in this nice open place beneath a green mound, then she would not be closed in by that dreadful wall.' He had always hated that high wall which surrounded the burial-place. Every time he thought of it he felt as if he had locked the poor little thing in a cold, dark house, and left her there without anyone to take care of her—' I am so cold, and it is so miserable here,' he thought he could hear her moan—' I am so cold, and it is so miserable here.'

Halvor went up the valley and followed the narrow pathway which runs along the city wall, until he reached Mount Zion. The burial-ground lay a little to the west of the Gate of Zion, below the large garden of the Armenians.

The whole way Halvor was thinking of his child. He did not lift his eyes from the ground as he walked along the familiar road. But all at once he had a feeling that everything here was not as usual. He looked round and saw that some men were busy pulling down a wall. He stood still and watched them. What was that they were pulling down ? Had there been a building or a stone wall ? It must be just about where the burial-place was, or could he have missed his way ?

It was some minutes before he could quite make out what it was, but then it dawned upon him what had happened. It was the high stone wall round the cemetery the men were pulling down.

Halvor tried to persuade himself that it was being pulled down

because they were going to extend the cemetery, or place an iron railing there instead of the wall. He tried to think that it would not be so damp and cold there when the wall was removed. But, all the same, such an anxious dread came over him that he began to run. 'If only they haven't touched the grave!' he thought. 'She is lying just under the wall. If only they haven't done anything to the grave!'

He was quite out of breath when he climbed over what remained of the wall, and found himself in the burial-ground. He saw at once how matters stood, and felt the same moment that something had happened to his heart. It suddenly stopped, then began to beat violently, and then stopped again. It was like the works of a clock that had gone to pieces.

Halvor was obliged to sit down on a stone until he felt better. By degrees the beating of his heart grew more regular, although still heavy and laboured. 'I am not going to die yet,' he thought—'I am not going to die yet.'

He took courage and looked round the cemetery. All the graves had been opened and the coffins taken away. Here and there lay some bones and skulls, which must have fallen out of the old coffins. All the gravestones were piled together in a corner of the graveyard.

'My God! what have they done with the dead?' Halvor cried. He went up to the workmen. 'What have you done with little Greta?' he asked in Swedish. He was hardly conscious of what he did, and did not know what he said. Then it struck him that he was speaking the old language, and he felt confused.

He tried to pull himself together and remember who he was; he was not a child to be so easily frightened, but a sensible man. He was a farmer, a big farmer; the whole parish at home had looked up to him; it would not do for a man like him to lose his wits.

Halvor straightened himself, and asked the workmen in English if they knew why the cemetery was being demolished.

The workmen were natives, but one of them knew a little English. He told Halvor that the Americans had sold the burial-place to some Germans who were going to build a hospital there, and that was why they had had to dig up the dead.

Halvor stood a moment silent, pondering over the man's reply. Oh, they were going to build a hospital here! Why in the world could they not find some other place on all these barren hills? why must it be built just here? Were they not afraid that the dead whom they had turned out would come and knock at the door of

the hospital, asking to be let in? 'We will also have a bed here,' they would say. And they would stand in a long row, Berger Larsson, and little Erik, and last of all his little girl.

Halvor stood battling with his sobs, all the time trying to appear as if it did not concern him. He tried to look indifferent, and stood swinging his bouquet of red anemones. 'But what have you done with the dead?' he asked.

'The Americans have been here and taken away their coffins,' the man answered. 'All the people who have any dead lying here have had word sent them that they should fetch the coffins.' The man suddenly stopped and looked at Halvor. 'You belong, perhaps, to the big house outside the Gate of Damascus?' he asked. 'The people who live there have not sent for any of their coffins.'

'We have received no message,' said Halvor. He still stood swinging his bouquet. His face had become quite stony in endeavouring not to show the men how he suffered.

'Those who have not been fetched are lying yonder,' said the man, pointing down the slope. 'I will show you where they are, so that you can come and bury them.'

The man walked on, and Halvor followed him. As they were getting over the ruins of the wall, Halvor took up a stone. The man walked on unconcernedly, and Halvor went behind with the stone in his hand. 'I can't understand that he is not afraid of me,' Halvor said aloud in Swedish, 'and that he does not keep further off. And he is one of those who have turned her out. He has thrown little Greta amongst all that rubbish.'

'Little Greta! little Greta!' he went on, 'she was so sweet that she deserved to lie in a marble tomb. And she has not even been allowed to lie in peace in that wretched grave.'

'Perhaps this is the very fellow who took her out of her grave,' said Halvor, raising the stone. 'I have never felt so sorely tempted to do anything as to smash that clean-shaven head under that red cap.'

'Let me tell you that it was little Greta from Ingmars' Farm,' he said, working himself up. 'And she would have had the right to lie next to Great Ingmar. She came of such a good family that she might have expected to lie in her own grave undisturbed until the Day of Judgment. In this place there was not even a proper funeral-feast for her, and the bells did not ring when she was carried to the grave, and there was not even a proper Pastor to read the service over her. But for all that you need not have turned her out of her grave. If I have not been

a good father to her so far, I can tell you I am not so bad that I will put up with her being turned out of her grave.'

Halvor raised his hand, and was just about to throw the stone at him, when the man turned round and said: 'Here they are.'

In the midst of all kinds of refuse and stone-heaps was a deep pit, into which they had thrown the plain black coffins of the colonists. They had been thrown in so carelessly that some of the older coffins had gone to pieces, and the dead bodies in them had become exposed. Some of the coffins lay bottom upwards, and long dried-up hands stretched out through the half-rotten lids, as if they were trying to get their coffins put right again.

Whilst Halvor was standing looking down at this, the man happened to look at Halvor's hand, which clenched the stone so tightly that the knuckles were quite white, and he saw on Halvor's face a look so terrible that with a loud cry he rushed away.

But Halvor was no longer thinking about the man. The dreadful sight seemed almost to have turned him into stone. The most horrible of all was that the smell from the coffins had already risen in the air, and proclaimed far and near what had happened. One or two vultures were already hovering overhead, only waiting for the darkness, in order to swoop down. One could hear in the distance the buzz of innumerable insects that swarmed over the coffins. One or two stray dogs came running up and stood looking down into the pit, their tongues hanging out of their mouths.

A shudder passed through Halvor when he bethought himself that he was standing on the slope leading down to the Valley of Hinnom, quite close to the spot where formerly burnt the fire of Gehenna. 'Verily, this is Gehenna, this is the abode of terror!' he exclaimed.

But he did not stop long looking at this abomination. He jumped down into the pit, turned the heavy coffins to one side, and crawled in between the dead. He searched and searched until he found the coffin of little Greta. And when at last he found it, he lifted it on to his shoulders and climbed out of the pit.

'She shall never be able to say that her father has allowed her to remain in this place through the night,' he cried.

'Dear little child!' he said in a grave and impressive voice, as if he wished to defend himself to the dead. 'Dearest little child, we knew nothing of all this. None of us knew that you had been turned out of your grave. The others were told what was going to happen, but we were not. They do not count us for anything; that is why they have not taken the trouble to let us know.'



When he got out of the pit with the coffin, he felt again that there was something wrong with his heart. He was obliged to sit down until the worst pain was over.

'You shall not be afraid, my little girl,' he said. 'It will soon be over; you must not think that father has not strength enough to carry his little girl away from here.'

In a little time he felt better, and with the coffin on his shoulder he set out for Jerusalem. As he walked along the narrow pathway outside the wall, it seemed to him as if everything had changed. The walls and the ruins looked menacingly at him. Everything looked weird and hostile. This foreign country and this foreign city seemed to rejoice over his sorrow.

'My little girl must not be angry with her father because he has brought her to such a cruel land,' he said. 'If this had happened at home,' he went on, 'the forests would have wept, and the mountains would have cried out; but this is a cruel land.'

He walked more and more slowly on account of his heart, for it seemed as if it had not strength to drive the blood through his veins. He felt so helpless and miserable, and a great fear came over him, because he was so far away in a foreign land, where no one would have any pity upon him. Then he turned round the corner, and walked along the outside of the eastern wall. The Valley of Jehoshaphat, with its thousands of graves, lay beneath him.

'And it is here Judgment will be held, and the dead rise,' he thought. 'What will God say to me on the Day of Judgment, I who have brought wife and children to Jerusalem, to this city of death?' he asked himself. 'And I have even persuaded my relatives and neighbours to come to this terrible city. They will accuse me before God.'

It seemed to him as if he could hear how his countrymen raised their voices against him: 'We believed in him, and he has brought us to a country where we are more despised than dogs, and to a city that has killed us with its cruelty.'

He tried to shake off these thoughts, and not to dwell upon them. But it was impossible. He seemed to see all at once the dangers and difficulties that lay before his comrades. He thought of the sore poverty that must soon overtake them, inasmuch as they took no payment for their work. He thought of the trying climate, and of all the sickness that would come upon them. He thought of the hard rules to which they had subjected themselves, and which would surely bring discord and destruction upon them. He felt weary unto death.

'Just as little as we can till the soil of this land or drink its water, just as little can we go on living here,' he moaned.

He dragged himself along more and more slowly. He was entirely exhausted, and all his strength seemed to have gone.

The colonists were already sitting at their evening meal, when they heard a faint ring from the bell at the gate.

When the gate was opened, Tims Halvor was found sitting on the ground outside. He was near unto death. His little daughter's coffin was lying beside him; he sat plucking to pieces a large bouquet of withered anemones, and was strewing the faded flowers over the coffin.

It was Ljung Björn who had gone out to open the gate. He fancied he heard Halvor say something, and bent down over him to hear what he said.

Halvor tried to speak several times before Ljung Björn could make out what it was. 'They have thrown out our dead,' he said; 'they are lying in the open air down in Gehenna. You must go to-night and fetch them.'

'What do you say?' asked Björn, who could not understand what he meant.

The dying man raised himself with a last effort. 'They have thrown our dead out of their graves, Björn. This very night you must all of you go down to Gehenna and fetch them away.' When he had said this he again fell back with a moan. 'I am so ill, Björn; there must be something the matter with my heart,' he whispered. 'I was afraid I should die before I could tell you about this. I carried little Greta home; I could not do any more.'

Ljung Björn knelt down beside him. 'Shall I not carry you in, Halvor?' he asked; but Halvor did not hear him.

'Promise me, Björn, that little Greta shall be properly buried. I don't want her to think that she has a bad father.'

'Yes,' said Björn, 'I promise; but will you not try to come into the house?'

Halvor's head sank lower. 'See that she is laid under a green mound,' he whispered. 'And let me, too, lie under a green mound,' he said in a little while.

Björn saw that he was very ill, and hastened into the house for help. When he came back, Halvor was already dead.

## CHAPTER X

### THE WELL OF PARADISE

It was very trying in Jerusalem that summer; there was a great dearth of water and much sickness. The winter rains had fallen very sparingly that year, and the Holy City, which for its supply of water principally depends upon the rain that is collected in the winter in the subterranean cisterns, of which every house has one, was soon in need of water. And when people had to resort to the inferior water that was still left at the bottom of the wells, sickness increased at an appalling rate. There was soon not a house where someone or other was not lying ill from small-pox, or scarlet fever, or climatic fever.

The members of the Gordon colony had a busy time of it. They were nearly all of them taken up with attending to the sick. Those amongst them who had been the longest in Jerusalem did not appear to be susceptible to infection; they could, apparently without risk, go from the one sick-bed to the other. The Swedish-Americans, who were accustomed to the hot summers of Chicago and to living in towns, were also able to stand both sickness and fatigue. But the poor peasants from Dalarne nearly all fell ill.

To begin with, they did not think it was so serious; the invalids were not confined to their beds, but they were unable to do any work. Although they grew very thin and the fever hung about them, none of them thought that it was more than a passing indisposition. But at the end of the first week Berger Persson's widow died, and soon after one of his sons. At the same time several fresh cases of sickness occurred; it seemed as if all the people from Dalarne were going to die.

All who were sick had the same longing and desire. They all begged for water—for just one drink of fresh, pure water. It seemed as if it were the only thing they needed to become well again.

But when they were offered water from the well, they turned

away their heads and would not even look at it. Although it was filtered and made as cold as possible, they fancied it had a mouldy smell and a horrible taste. Two or three of the patients who had tried to drink it were seized with violent pains, and declared that they had been poisoned.

One morning, when the sickness was at its worst, some of the peasants sat in the narrow shadow of the house talking together. They all had fever; it was easy to see that from their emaciated faces and from their eyes, which were dull and bloodshot. They were all sitting idle, and were not even smoking their short clay pipes.

All they did was to gaze at the blue, cloudless sky over their heads. They watched it anxiously, and not even the smallest cloud on the horizon escaped their notice. They were all aware that no rain could be expected for the first two or three months but as soon as one of the white summer clouds rose in the distance they fancied that something miraculous, perhaps, might happen, and that the rain might soon come. 'Who knows but that God, after all, will help us?' they said.

Whilst they were attentively watching the growth of the clouds and their passage across the sky, they sat talking about what it would be like to hear big drops beating against the walls and windows, to see water rushing out of the rain-pipes and running down the road, carrying with it sand and small stones. They were all agreed that they would not seek shelter if it should begin to rain; they would sit quite still and let the rain come down upon them. They felt as if they needed to be soaked through, just as the dry earth did.

But when the clouds had risen a little higher, there was no denying that they grew smaller and seemed to melt away. The fleecy edges were the first to disappear, then the cloud itself seemed to break up into small pieces, and in a few moments they had disappeared altogether.

When the peasants could no longer see the cloud they were in despair. The old men were so weak from illness that they covered their eyes with their hands to hide the tears that would come.

Ljung Björn Olofsson, who felt as if he were the leader of the Swedish peasants after the death of Tims Halvor, tried to encourage the others. He talked to them about the brook of Kedron, that in olden times had flowed through the Valley of Jehoshaphat, and supplied Jerusalem with plenteous water. He had his Bible in his pocket, and opened it and read to them all the places where the brook of Kedron was mentioned. He described

to them what a mighty stream Kedron had been; it had driven water-mills, and in the winter it had overflowed and watered the whole neighbourhood.

One could hear that it was a pleasure to Ljung Björn to talk about this great river which had once flowed past Jerusalem. He seemed always to have this river in his thoughts. Most of all he dwelt upon that chapter in the Bible where it is related that David crossed the brook of Kedron when he fled from Absalom. Ljung Björn described to the others what it would be like to walk with bare feet in the cold running water. 'I, for one, would sooner do that than drink it,' he said.

Ljung Björn had not finished talking about Kedron, when his brother-in-law, Kulas Gunnar, interrupted him. Gunnar said he did not care to hear anything about Kedron, which had dried up and vanished long ago. But ever since this hard time began he had been thinking about a prophecy of Ezekiel, in the forty-seventh chapter and the first and following verses. It was about a river which should issue from the threshold of the Temple and flow over the plain even unto the Dead Sea. Kulas Gunnar brushed away his black hair from his forehead whilst he spoke, his eyes sparkled, and he spoke in such a way that all the peasants saw before them the water flowing from Jerusalem. The water flowed on, softly rippling over the stones. Then it divided into many small becks, which ran through the green meadows. Willows and poplars grew on their banks; big succulent plants hung over the surface of the water. At the bottom of the becks lay small white stones, and the water gleamed and rippled when it flowed over them.

'And this must some day come to pass,' exclaimed Kulas Gunnar. 'It is a promise from God, and it has not yet been fulfilled. I go about thinking that perhaps it may be to-day or to-morrow.'

But when Hök Gabriel Mattsson, who was also sitting there, heard that, he grew very excited, borrowed Ljung Björn's Bible, and read aloud some verses out of the Book of Chronicles. 'Listen to this,' he said; 'this is the most wonderful thing I have ever heard,' and then he read how, in the days of King Hezekiah, news came that Sennacherib was on his way to besiege Jerusalem. Then Hezekiah took counsel with his princes and his mighty men, and they all said: 'Why should the Kings of Assyria come and find much water?' Then Hezekiah went out with all his men and stopped the waters outside Jerusalem, both the great brook that ran through the midst of the land and all the fountains.

When Gabriel had finished reading this, he looked upon the barren fields that surrounded the colony. 'I have meditated much upon this,' he said, 'and I have asked the Americans about it. And now I will tell you what I have found out.'

Gabriel spoke easily and fluently, just as his father Hök Matts did when the spirit came upon him and he began to preach. Otherwise he was not much of a speaker, but now, with the fever running in his veins, the words flowed freely from his lips.

'The Americans told me,' continued Gabriel, 'that in the time of King Hezekiah this mountain plain was covered with countless trees and shrubs. Corn could not grow in this stony soil, but there were a great many gardens full of pomegranate and apricot trees, of saffron and calmus and cinnamon, of kofer shrubs and nardus plants, of all kinds of fragrant herbs, and of all kinds of luscious fruits. All these trees were well watered; from brooks and becks the water flowed into every single garden, and the owners of the gardens had the right to flood their gardens with water at a certain time every day. 'But one morning King Hezekiah went out with his men—one morning when all these trees were in the height of their bloom. When Hezekiah went forth, the almond and apricot trees showered their blossoms upon him. The air was full of spicy fragrance when Hezekiah went forth. And towards the close of the day, when Hezekiah returned with his army, the trees again saluted him with their balmy fragrance.

'But that day King Hezekiah had been out to stop all the fountains of Jerusalem and the great brook that ran through the midst of the land. And the next day there was no water in the little becks that watered the roots of the trees. 'Some weeks later, when the trees should have brought forth their fruit, they had no strength, and brought forth but little fruit; and when the leaves sprang out, they were small and crumpled.

'But after that sore troubles came upon Jerusalem—wars and great calamities. No one had time to again open the fountains and lead back the waters of the great brook to its bed. And then the fruit-trees died on the mountain plain round the city, some in the first summer drought, some in the second, some in the third. And round about Jerusalem the land became barren, as it is unto this day.'

Gabriel took up a little stone, and began to bore in the ground with it. 'But then it happened,' he continued, 'that, when the Jews returned from Babylon, they could not find the place where the brook had been stopped, nor could they find the springs of the fountains. And no one has found them unto this very day.

'But we who sit here pining for water,' he continued, 'why do we not go out to look for King Hezekiah's fountains? Why do we not go out to find the great brook and the many fountains? If we find them, trees could again grow upon the mountain plains, and this land would become rich and fruitful. Could we but find them, it would be worth more than finding gold.'

When Gabriel had finished talking, the others pondered over his words; they all agreed that it might be as he said, and that perhaps it might not be impossible to find the great brook. But not one of them stirred in order to go out and begin the search, not even Gabriel. His words were apparently nothing but a fancy with which he tried to quieten his longings.

Then Bo Ingmar Mansson began to speak; he had hitherto been silent and listened to the others. He had no fever himself, but there was no one who longed more for fresh water than he; for Gertrud had also fallen a victim to this craving for water. For her sake, he longed so much for water that his lips were dry, and he, just as much as the others, could think of nothing but fountains and streams.

'I am not thinking of such wonderful and holy waters as you others,' said Bo slowly; 'but from morning to night I think of a stream that flows clear and fresh with blue sparkling water.'

The peasants raised their heads, a look of keen expectancy in their eyes.

'I think of a stream which receives the water from many brooks and becks, and which flows broad and deep from out of the dark forest, and which is so clear that one can see all the stones shining at its bottom. And that stream is not dried up like Kedron, nor only a vision like the river of Ezekiel, nor impossible to find like the brook of Hezekiah, but it flows and surges to this very day. I think of the Dalar River.'

The three men did not answer a word. They sat silent with downcast eyes. After they heard the name of the Dalar River, no one could persuade himself to speak about the fountains and brooks of Palestine.

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The same day, about dinner-time, a new death occurred. It was one of Kulas Gunnar's children, a bright little fellow of whom they were all very fond. But it seemed now as if they hardly sorrowed over the child; all the Dalar people were filled with such terror that they could hardly control it. They thought that the little dead child lay there as a sign that it was impossible for any of them to get over this illness.

They at once set to work with the usual hasty preparations for the funeral. But those who made the coffin wondered who would do that work for them, and those who made the shroud only talked about how they would like theirs to be made when their turn came.

'If you outlive me,' one woman said to another, 'then remember that I would like to lie in my own clothes.'

'Remember,' said another, 'that I want black crape on the coffin, and I want to be buried with my wedding-ring on.'

In the midst of the preparations a strange whisper spread amongst the colonists. No one knew who first uttered the words, but when they had been said it seemed to take root in them all, and they all began to think and ponder over them. As often happens, they first thought that what had been suggested was unreasonable and impossible, but little by little it seemed to them that it was the only sensible thing to do.

Soon nothing else was talked about in the whole colony, both amongst the sick and the hale, both amongst the Americans and the Swedes. 'It was, perhaps, better that the Swedes should go back again,' they all said.

None of the Americans could hide from themselves that it really seemed as if all the peasants would die in Jerusalem. However regrettable it might be that so many good and estimable people should leave the colony, there seemed to be no other course left. It was better for them to go home again, and serve the cause of God the best way they could in their own country, than to perish here in the Holy City.

The Swedes at first thought it would be impossible for them to tear themselves away from this land, with its holy places and memories, and they trembled at the thought of again being thrust into the strife and unrest of the world, after they had become accustomed to the quiet and peaceful life of the colony. Some of them even thought that it would almost be better to die than to go back again. But then came the thoughts of home, luring and tempting. 'Perhaps, after all, there is nothing else left for us but to go,' they said.

Suddenly they heard the bell which otherwise only called the colonists to service or meetings in the assembly-room. They were much surprised, and almost alarmed. They at once understood that Mrs. Gordon wished to call them together, in order to consult with them about their journey home. They were not yet quite clear themselves as to what they wanted to do, but all the same there was a feeling of relief in the very thought that they



could get away from sickness and death. This was plainly shown by several who were very ill in bed getting up and dressing themselves in order to be present at the meeting.

There was not the same order and quietness in the large room as was usually the case at their meetings. No one sat down, but they stood about in groups, talking together. They were all much agitated, none more so than Hellgum. It was easy to see that he, who had persuaded the Dalar peasants to go to Palestine, felt himself weighed down by the heavy responsibility he had taken upon himself. He went from the one to the other, urging them to go back.

Mrs. Gordon was very pale; she looked tired and worn. She was evidently so undecided as to what she meant to do that she was afraid to open the proceedings. No one had ever seen her hesitate like this.

The Dalar peasants said nothing. They were much too weak and ill to arrive at any decision themselves, but simply waited for the others to decide for them.

Some of the young American girls were almost beside themselves from pity. They stood begging that these sick people might be sent home—that they would not let them remain here to die.

Whilst the matter was being eagerly discussed, for and against, the door was noiselessly opened, and Karin Ingmarsdotter entered the room.

Karin Ingmarsdotter had become feeble and bent. She had aged perceptibly. Her face had grown small and shrunken, and her hair was quite gray. After her husband Halvor Halvorsson's death, Karin had but rarely left her room. She sat there quite alone in a big easy-chair Halvor had made for her. Now and then she exerted herself to mend and sew for the two children still left to her, but generally she sat with her hands crossed in her lap, gazing straight before her.

No one could enter a room more modestly than Karin did, but all the same, for some reason or other, they all grew silent when she came in, and turned round to look at her.

Karin went slowly and modestly up the room. She did not walk up the middle, but alongside the wall, until she came to Mrs. Gordon.

Mrs. Gordon went a step or two to meet her, and put out her hand. 'We have met here to speak about your going home,' said Mrs. Gordon to her. 'What do you think about it, Karin?'

Karin seemed quite overcome at hearing this. Into her dim

eyes came a look of deep longing. She must surely have seen the old farm before her, and thought that perhaps she might once again be allowed to sit near the fireplace in the big room, or stand at the gate on a spring morning and see the cows being driven out to grass.

But this lasted only a moment. Karin drew herself up, and her face again assumed its usual expression of stubborn endurance. 'There is only one thing I should like to ask,' said Karin in English, so distinctly that they could all hear her. 'It was the voice of God that called us to Jerusalem. Has anyone heard the voice of God commanding him to return?'

There was complete silence in the room after Karin's question. No one had the courage to answer a single word.

But Karin had the fever, like all the rest of them, and she had hardly finished speaking when she swayed and nearly fell. Mrs. Gordon put her arm round her and led her away.

When Karin went past her old townsfolk, one or two of them nodded to her. 'Thank you for what you said, Karin,' they said.

As soon as Karin had left the room, the Americans again began to speak about the Swedes going home, as if nothing had happened. The Dalar peasants, without saying anything, one by one quietly left the room.

'Why are you going?' asked one of the Americans. 'The meeting will begin as soon as Mrs. Gordon comes back.'

'Don't you understand that everything has already been settled?' said Ljung Björn. 'You do not need to hold a meeting for our sake. We had nearly forgotten, but now we remember that no one but God can order about our goings.'

The Americans saw with astonishment that Ljung Björn and all his countrymen raised their heads, and looked less downcast and worn than when they had entered the room. Strength and endurance returned when they saw their way clear before them, and no longer thought of fleeing from danger.

\* \* \* \*

Gertrud was lying ill in the little room which she had shared with Gunhild. It was a cosy and pretty room. Bo and Gabriel had made all the furniture, and it was prettier and daintier than any of the other rooms. The white curtains and bed-hangings Gertrud had herself woven and hem-stitched and trimmed with lace.

After Gunhild's death, Betsy Nelson, one of the Swedish-American girls, had joined in the room. She had become a great

friend of Gertrud's, and now, when Gertrud was ill, Betsy nursed her with much tenderness.

It was on the evening of the same day that it had been decided at the great meeting that the Dalar peasants should remain in Jerusalem. Gertrud was in rather a high fever, and lay talking incessantly. Betsy sat at her bedside, and now and then said something to try and quieten her.

Suddenly Betsy saw the door gently opened, and Bo entered. He came in as quietly as possible, and remained standing close to the door. Gertrud hardly seemed to notice that he had come in, but Betsy hastily turned round, to order him out of the sick-room. But when she saw his face, she was quite touched, and felt the greatest pity for him. 'Poor fellow! he thinks Gertrud is going to die,' she thought. 'I expect he thinks there is no hope for her now that the Dalar peasants have made up their minds to remain in Jerusalem.' All at once it dawned upon her how much Bo loved Gertrud, and she said to herself: 'I think I had better allow him to remain in the room; I have not the heart to forbid him seeing her as long as he has the chance of doing so.'

So Bo was allowed to remain standing inside the door, and he could hear every word Gertrud said. Her fever was not so high that she was actually delirious, but she talked incessantly about wells and springs, just like the other fever patients. She complained continually about the terrible burning thirst that tormented her. Betsy poured out some water into a glass, and offered it to her. 'Drink this water, Gertrud; it is all right.'

Gertrud raised her head a little from the pillow, and took the glass to drink it, but before she tasted it she threw back her head. 'Do you not notice how horribly it smells?' she moaned; 'do you want to make me quite ill?'

'It neither tastes nor smells of anything,' said Betsy gently. 'It has been specially purified and filtered so that the sick can drink it without risk.'

Betsy tried to persuade her to drink, but Gertrud pushed the glass away so violently that the water was spilt on the quilt. 'I should have thought you could see how ill I am, and not try to poison me,' she said.

'You would be better if you would only try and taste the water,' Betsy persisted. Gertrud did not answer, but began to sob. 'But, my dear child, why are you crying?' asked Betsy.

'It is so dreadful that no one can get me any water fit to drink, that I must lie here and die of thirst without anyone having pity upon me.'

'You know that we would only be too glad to help you if we could,' Betsy said, stroking her hand.

'Then, why don't you give me some water?' sobbed Gertrud. 'I am only ill from thirst. I should be quite well if I could only get a drink of pure, fresh water.'

'There is no better water to be found in the whole of Jerusalem,' Betsy said in a sorrowful tone.

Gertrud did not listen to her. 'It would not be so hard to bear if one did not know there was good water to be had,' she moaned. 'To think that one must lie here and die of thirst, when there is a whole well full of pure, fresh water in the city of Jerusalem!'

Bo started when he heard this, and he looked inquiringly at Betsy. She only shrugged her shoulders and shook her head. 'It is only something she imagines,' her looks said.

But when Bo continued to look so questioningly at her, Betsy tried to make Gertrud explain what she meant. 'I do not think there is any really good water to be found in Jerusalem,' she said.

'It is strange you cannot remember,' said Gertrud, 'or perhaps you were not with us that day we went to see the old palace where the Temple of the Jews once stood.'

'Of course I was.'

'It was not in Omar's Mosque,' Gertrud said reflectingly; 'it was not in the beautiful mosque in the centre of the square, but it was in the ugly old mosque on the one side of it. Do you not remember that there was a well there?'

'Oh yes, I remember quite well; but I can't understand why you should think there would be better water in that well than in all the other wells in the town.'

'It is hard to have to talk so much when one has such a burning thirst,' said Gertrud. 'You might have listened to Miss Young when she told us about the well.'

It really did hurt her to talk with dry lips and parched throat, but before Betsy could answer she had already begun to tell her all she knew about the well. 'That is the only well in Jerusalem where there is always good water,' she said. 'And the reason is, that it has its springs in Paradise.'

'How can you or anyone else know that?' Betsy said, with a smile.

'Yes, but I do know,' Gertrud continued earnestly. 'Miss Young told us that a poor water-carrier once, in a severe summer drought, went into the old mosque to fetch water. He placed his bucket in the hook of the rope which hung over the well, and

lowered it down. But when the bucket touched the surface of the water it slipped off the hook, and fell to the bottom of the well. You can imagine that the man did not wish to lose his bucket.'

'Yes, of course I can,' answered Betsy.

'He therefore lost no time in getting hold of two other water-carriers, and he made them lower him down into the well.'

Gertrud raised herself on her elbow and looked at Betsy with her feverish eyes. 'He went very far down, and the lower he went the more surprised he became, for a soft light seemed to come from the bottom of the well. And when at last he felt firm ground under him, the water had quite disappeared, and instead he saw a beautiful garden. It was neither the sun nor the moon that shone there, but a faint light of day hovered over the garden so that he could see quite distinctly. The strangest thing was, that everything appeared to him to be asleep. The petals of all the flowers were closed, the leaves of the trees were stiff and folded together, and the long grass lay, limp, on the ground. The most beautiful trees stood leaning their crowns against each other as if asleep, and the birds sat silent and motionless on the branches, and nothing was either red or green, but everything was gray, just like ashes—but, all the same, very beautiful, you understand.' Gertrud told everything very circumstantially, as if she were anxious that Betsy should believe her.

'What happened to the man then?' asked Betsy.

'Oh, at first he stood and could not at all make out where he had got to; but then he became afraid, lest the men who had lowered him down should become impatient if he stayed too long. But before he allowed himself to be drawn up to the surface, he went to the largest and most beautiful tree in the garden, and broke off a branch and took it with him.'

'I think he should have stayed longer in the garden,' said Betsy, smiling, but Gertrud did not allow herself to be put out. 'When he came up to his friends,' she continued, 'he told them about everything he had seen, and showed them the branch he had brought with him. And now listen: the same moment the branch came into the air and light, it began to live. The leaves sprang out; they lost their gray colour and became fresh and green. And when the water-carrier and his friends saw this, they knew that he had been down in the Garden of Paradise, that is lying sleeping under Jerusalem, until on the Day of Judgment it shall rise to the surface of the earth in new glory and splendour.' Gertrud breathed heavily and fell back upon the pillow. 'Dear Gertrud, you will be tired with talking so much,' Betsy said.

'I am obliged to talk to make you understand why there is good water in that well,' Gertrud replied; 'but now I have told you the whole story. You can understand that no one would have believed that the man had really been in Paradise if he had not taken that little branch with him, for that little branch was not like any of the trees which people have seen, and therefore his friends at once wanted to go to the bottom of the well to see Paradise; but the water had again returned to the well, and however deep they dived they could not reach the bottom.'

'Has no one else ever seen Paradise?' Betsy asked.

'No, never; and since that time the water has never dried up in the well, so that although numbers—countless numbers—have attempted it, no one since that time has succeeded in reaching the bottom.' Gertrud sighed deeply, and then began afresh: 'Can you understand that we are not meant to see Paradise in this life?'

'I suppose not,' agreed Betsy.

'But the most important thing for us to know is that it is lying there asleep waiting for us.'

'To be sure,' said Betsy.

'And now you can surely see, Betsy, that there must always be fresh and pure water in that well, when it has its springs in Paradise?'

'If I could only get that water for you, dear, for which you long so much!' Betsy said with a gentle smile.

Just as Betsy said this one of her little sisters opened the door and beckoned to her. 'Betsy, mother is not well,' the child said; 'she wants you.'

Betsy looked undecided for a moment—she did not know if she dare leave Gertrud; but she quickly made up her mind, and turned to Bo, who had been standing the whole time by the door. 'You can stay with Gertrud whilst I am away, can you not?' she said.

'Yes,' answered Bo; 'I will look after her as well as I can.'

'Try, if you can, to make her drink a little water, so that she may get it out of her head that she is going to die of thirst,' Betsy whispered as she left the room.

Bo sat down in Betsy's chair beside the bed. It seemed to be a matter of perfect indifference to Gertrud whether it were he or Betsy who sat by her. She continued to talk about the Well of Paradise, and pictured to herself how pure and clear and refreshing its water must be.

'You see, Bo, I cannot convince Betsy that the water in that

well is better than the water in any other well in the city,' she moaned. 'That is why she won't do anything to get me some.'

Bo sat meditating and gazing before him. 'I am wondering whether I should not go into the city and get some of that water for you,' he said.

Gertrud grew quite frightened, and took hold of his coat-sleeve to hold him back. 'Oh, you must not think of doing that! I only complain because I am so thirsty. I know quite well that Betsy cannot get me any water from the Well of Paradise. Miss Young told us that the Mohammedans consider it so holy that they never allow any Christian to fetch water from it.'

Bo sat silent for awhile, but he could not help thinking about the well. 'Perhaps I could dress myself up as a Mohammedan,' he said.

'You must not think of such a thing,' Gertrud answered. 'It would be very foolish of you.'

But Bo could not leave this idea alone. 'I might speak to the old shoemaker who mends our shoes; I think I could get him to lend me his clothes.'

Gertrud lay quite still, thinking. 'Is the shoemaker here to-day?' she asked.

'Yes,' answered Bo.

'Oh, it is of no use,' sighed Gertrud.

'I think I had better set off now, this afternoon, when there is no fear of my getting sunstroke,' said Bo.

'But are you not dreadfully afraid? You must remember that if they find out that you are a Christian they will kill you.'

'Oh, I am not afraid if I can only get properly dressed out with a red fez, and a white turban, and a pair of shabby yellow slippers, and the clothes tucked up as you know the water-carriers have.'

'But what do you intend to carry the water in?'

'I will take two of our large copper buckets, and hang them in a yoke over my shoulders,' answered Bo.

It seemed to him as if the prospect of his going to fetch the water had put new life into Gertrud, although she still raised some objections. But at the same time he realized how thoroughly impossible the whole thing was. 'How can I even think of fetching water from the mosque which the Mohammedans consider so holy that they will hardly allow a Christian to enter it?' he said to himself. 'The brothers in the colony would not even allow me to try, however much I wanted. And, besides, it would be

of no use if I could, for I should think the water in the Well of Paradise is just as bad as in all the other wells.'

Whilst he was thinking this over, he was aroused by hearing Gertrud say: 'I don't think there are many people about at this time.'

'She is evidently expecting me to go,' thought Bo; 'how shall I get out of it? Gertrud looks so much better that I dare not tell her how impossible it all is. You are quite right,' said Bo hesitatingly; 'there would not be any trouble until I got to the Gate of Damascus, if I only don't meet any of the colonists.'

'Do you think that they would forbid you to go?' Gertrud asked, looking quite alarmed.

Bo had just been contemplating hinting at something to that effect in order to put an end to this plan; but when he saw how troubled she was he had not the heart. 'Oh, there is no fear of their stopping me,' he said cheerfully, 'for they won't even know me when they see me coming dressed up as a water-carrier, with the large buckets dangling about my legs.'

Gertrud looked reassured. Her thoughts at once moved in another direction. 'Are the buckets very large?' she asked.

'Yes, that they are; they will hold more water than you can drink in a week.'

After that Gertrud was silent, but she looked at Bo with eyes that begged him so earnestly to go on that he could not resist them. 'When I get inside the Gate of Damascus it will not be so easy,' he said. 'I hardly know how I shall manage to get through the crowd.'

'But the other water-carriers manage all right,' Gertrud objected eagerly.

'Yes, but it is not only the people—there are the camels,' said Bo. He did his best to think of all possible obstacles.

'Do you think it will take you a long time to get through?' asked the sick girl anxiously.

Bo felt just as he did before; he felt that he could not tell Gertrud how impossible the whole thing was. 'If the buckets were full of water, I think I should be obliged to wait; but as they are empty, I can no doubt push my way amongst the camels.'

Bo was again silent, but Gertrud put out her thin hand and stroked his hand caressingly. 'It is so good of you to go and fetch the water for me,' she said softly.

'God forgive me for sitting here and making her believe that I mean to do it,' thought Bo. But when Gertrud's hand continued to stroke his, he went on telling her what he would do next.



'Then I shall go straight on until I come to Via Dolorosa,' he said.

'There are never very many people there,' Gertrud said in a glad voice.

'No, I don't suppose I shall meet anyone there except some old nuns,' Bo said briskly. 'I can go on without meeting any obstacles until I get to the seraglio and the prisons.' Bo again stopped, but Gertrud went on stroking his hand gently. It was like a silent prayer to him to go on. 'I really believe she feels less thirsty simply because I am telling her about fetching the water,' he thought. 'I shall be obliged to go on telling her how I manage.'

'When I get to the prisons I shall again find myself in a crowd,' he continued, 'for the police, I suppose, will come dragging a thief along as usual to take him to prison, and then there are always a lot of people standing outside discussing the matter.'

'You will get along as quickly as you can, won't you?' said Gertrud.

'No, that would not do, for then they would find out that I was not a native. No, I shall stop and listen as if I were curious to find out what it is all about.'

'But when you can't understand anything?'

'Oh, I shall understand enough to find out that someone has been stealing. When they have at last all found out that there is no more excitement to be got out of that thief, the crowd will disperse, and I walk on. Now I have only to go through a dark archway, and then I come to the Temple Square. But I am certain that, just as I am going to stride over one of the children lying asleep in the street, a boy will trip me up, and I shall stumble and begin to swear in Swedish. And then, of course, I shall be dreadfully frightened that the children may have noticed anything. But they still lie, lazy and unconcerned, in all the dirt.' Gertrud's hand was still lying caressingly on Bo's, and he felt so wonderfully happy on that account, and he was so cheered that he felt as if he could say and do anything in order to please her. He felt as if he were telling a child a fairy tale, and he began to amuse himself by embellishing his tale more and more. 'I shall have to make as much out of it as possible, as it seems to please her,' he thought; 'later on I must see how I can get out of it all.' 'Then I come to the large open Temple Square in all the sunshine,' said Bo, 'and I can assure you that for a moment I quite forget you, and the well, and the water I am going to fetch.'

'What in the world has happened?' said Gertrud, smiling at him.

'Nothing whatever has happened,' Bo answered with great composure; 'but it is so light and so beautiful here, and so peaceful compared with the dirty town I have just passed through, that I only feel tempted to stand still and look about. And then there is the beautiful Mosque of Omar, which stands on the raised site in the centre, and the many pavilions, and gateways, and staircases, and wells, to look at. And think of all the memories! When I call to mind that I am standing on the site of the old Temple of the Jews, I wish that the large stone slabs with which the square is paved could speak, and would tell me all they have seen.'

'But don't you think it is risky to stand there so long, considering how foreign you look?' the sick girl said.

'Gertrud is longing for me to hurry home with the water,' Bo thought. 'It is strange how eager she is. I believe she really thinks I am on my way to the Well of Paradise.'

But as a matter of fact Bo was no better himself; he was so absorbed in his tale that he saw the whole of the Temple Square before him, and spoke about his experiences just as if they were really happening.

'Well, I don't stop there very long, either. I go past the Mosque of Omar and past the big black cypress-trees, to the southern side, and past the big water reservoir which they say is the copper vessel from the Temple of Solomon. And everywhere there are people lying on the stones getting baked in the sun. In one place there is a heap of children, in another a heap of idlers, and a dervish sheik is sitting on the ground surrounded by his disciples. He sways backwards and forwards with his body whilst he is talking to them, and as I stand looking at him I cannot help thinking to myself: "In the same way, no doubt, Jesus once sat on this Temple Square teaching His disciples." Just as I stand thinking about this, the dervish sheik turns his head and looks at me; you can imagine how frightened I am: he has big black eyes that look straight through one.'

'If only he does not find out that you are not a real water-carrier!' said Gertrud.

'Oh no, he does not appear to be the least surprised at seeing me; but directly afterwards I have to pass two real water-carriers, who are drawing water from a well. They call to me, but I look at them, and make a sign that I am going into the mosque. Then everything is quiet behind me.'

'Fancy if they find out that you are not a Mussulman!'

'I turn round once more to look at them, but they are standing quite still, with their backs turned to me, talking together.'

'They have perhaps seen something that looks even stranger than you do.'

'I suppose they have. At last I reach the old mosque El Aksa, where the Well of Paradise is,' says Bo, 'and I am just going past the two pillars in the gateway that stand so close together, and about which you know it is said that no one but the just can pass between them. "I shall take very good care not to try and pass between the pillars to-day when I am out stealing water," I say to myself.'

'How can you talk like that,' interrupted Gertrud, 'when it is the kindest thing you ever did in your life?'

Gertrud was lying, full of glad expectation, listening. Her fever was so high that she was not quite clear what was real and what was not, and she quite believed that Bo was on his way to the Well of Paradise to fetch the water.

'Then I take off my slippers, and go into the El Aksa Mosque,' Bo continued. He felt as if it were very easy work to make up this story, but he shuddered at the thought of the moment when he would have to confess to Gertrud that it was not possible for him to procure the water for her. 'And when I get inside, I see at once the well to the left amongst a whole forest of pillars. There is a winch with a rope and a hook, and it is a simple matter to get the buckets filled. And I need not tell you that the water which I draw from the well is the purest and clearest spring water, and I think to myself that Gertrud will only have to see and taste this water in order to become quite well again.'

'If only it will not take you too long to bring it home,' Gertrud said.

'I must tell you,' Bo went on, 'that I am not quite so unconcerned now as on my way out. Now that I have the water, I am afraid of losing it. And as I approach the doorway I get more and more nervous, for I can hear shouts and cries.'

'Oh, what do you think is the matter?' asked Gertrud, and Bo saw that she was quite pale with anxiety.

Bo's imagination, however, took additional flights when he saw how interested Gertrud was, and he exclaimed: 'What is the matter? Neither more nor less than that the whole of Jerusalem is after me.'

Bo waited a moment, as if to emphasize his consternation and fright. 'Yes, all those who were lying about the square have

got up and are standing outside El Aksa. And their shouts are attracting people from all parts. From the Mosque of Omar, the highest official in his big turban and foxskin coat comes along in a great hurry ; children come running from the doorways, and from all the corners and nooks of the Temple Square idlers and vagabonds make their appearance. And I see nothing before me but clenched fists, and angry faces, and outstretched arms, and a confused mass of striped brown mantles, and swaying garments, and red belts, and yellow slippers stamping the ground.'

Bo took a look at Gertrud when he told her all this. She did not interrupt him with questions, but she listened with the most rapt attention, and in her excitement she had raised herself a little from the pillow.

'I do not understand a word of what they are shouting to me, as you may imagine,' Bo continued ; 'but I can see, of course, that they are angry because a Christian has had the audacity to fetch water from the Well of Paradise.'

Gertrud sank back upon the pillow, quite pale. 'I can see you will never be able to get back again with the water,' she said in a despondent voice.

'I should think not,' he thought to himself. But when he saw her grief his heart was moved. 'I think I shall have to arrange my story so that Gertrud, after all, will be able to get the water from Paradise,' he thought.

'Do they get the water away from you?' asked Gertrud.

'No ; to begin with they do nothing but shout ; they don't quite know themselves what they want.' Bo was silent for a little while ; he did not know, either, what he should say next to get out of this dilemma.

But Gertrud herself came to his rescue. 'I hoped that the man who was sitting talking to his disciples would help you,' she said.

Bo drew a deep breath. 'To fancy that you could guess it !' he exclaimed. 'I can see that the high official of the mosque in the fine foxskin coat begins to give orders to the people,' he continued. 'Then they draw their daggers from their belts and rush upon me. It looks as if they mean to kill me straight off. But, strange to say, I am not a bit afraid of my life ; I am only afraid of the water being upset. And as they come rushing up, I, of course, place the buckets on the ground and stand in front of them. And as they come up I put out both my arms and knock them over. They look quite frightened as they fall backwards ; they had never before known what it was to fight with a Dalar man. But

they are soon up again, and still more of them come on. And there are now so many of them that it is quite plain to me that I cannot hold my own.'

'But now you will see the dervish sheik will come and help you,' Gertrud chimed in.

Bo at once fell in with her idea. 'Yes, he comes along quite quietly and with much dignity, and says a few words to the people, and they at once leave off threatening and assaulting me.'

'I know quite well what he does now,' said Gertrud.

'He looks at me with a calm, penetrating glance,' said Bo.

'Yes, but what then?'

Bo tried his utmost to invent something, but no thoughts would come. 'I think you must have guessed already,' said he in order to make Gertrud say something.

Gertrud saw the whole scene distinctly before her; she continued at once: 'Then he pushes you to one side and looks down into the buckets.'

'Yes, that is exactly what he does,' said Bo.

'He looks down into the water from the Well of Paradise,' said Gertrud, with a significant look at Bo.

But before she had time to say any more, Bo, without knowing how, had read her thoughts, and he saw all at once how she expected the story to end. He began to speak very eagerly: 'You know, Gertrud, that there was nothing but water in the buckets when I carried them out of El Aksa—nothing whatever but clear water.'

'But now?'

'When the dervish bends over them, I see two twigs floating on the water.'

'Yes,' said Gertrud, 'I knew that would happen. And on the twigs there are some crumpled gray leaves—don't you see them?'

'Yes, I do.'

'That dervish is a kind of miracle-worker, isn't he?'

'I think he must be,' said Bo; 'but he is also kind and good.'

'Now he bends down, takes up the twigs, and holds them high in the air,' said Gertrud; 'and then the leaves spring out beautifully fresh and green.'

'And then the whole crowd break into shouts of joy,' Bo hurriedly put in, 'and, with the fresh leaves in his hand, the dervish goes up to the official from the mosque. He points to the twigs, and he points to me: I can guess what he is saying. "That Christian has brought up these twigs and leaves from Paradise. Can you not understand that he is under the protec-

tion of God? it will never do to murder him." Then he comes up to me, still holding the pretty leaves in his hand. I can see how they shine in the sun, and change colour; sometimes they are red as copper, and sometimes blue as steel. He helps me to put the yoke across my shoulders, and makes a sign to me that I am to go away. And I go as quickly as I can, but I can't help looking back several times. And he stands the whole time holding the bright leaves high in the air, and the crowd stand quite still looking at him. And they remain standing like this until I get quite out of the Temple Square.'

'God bless him!' said Gertrud, looking at Bo with a happy smile. 'And now you are bringing me the water from the Well of Paradise.'

'Yes,' said Bo; 'now there is no more trouble; now I am coming back all safe.'

At the same moment Gertrud raised her head expectantly and smiled again.

'Oh dear! she expects that I have got the water here,' thought Bo. 'It was dreadful of me to deceive her. I am sure she will die if I tell her that I have not got the water she is longing so much for.'

In his despair he seized the glass of water that stood on the table, the same that Betsy had before offered to Gertrud, and gave it to her. 'Will you not taste the water from the Well of Paradise, Gertrud?' he said, his voice trembling with emotion. He was terrified to see Gertrud sit up in bed and grasp the glass with both hands. She drank the half of it with great eagerness.

'God bless you,' she said; 'I think now I shall get better.'

'You shall have more by-and-by,' said Bo.

'I should like you to give the other sick people some of the water, that they, too, may get better,' said Gertrud.

'No,' said Bo; 'the water from the Well of Paradise is only for you. No one else shall taste it.'

'But you must taste how beautiful it is,' she said.

'Yes, I will,' said Bo.

He took the glass from Gertrud's hand, turned it so that his lips should touch the place which her lips had just touched, and looked at Gertrud with eyes that beamed with happiness.

But before he had emptied the glass Gertrud had sunk back upon the pillow, and had fallen asleep as lightly and quickly as a child.

## CHAPTER XI

### INGMAR INGMARSSON

ONE Sunday afternoon, about a year and a half after the arrival of the Dalar peasants in Jerusalem, they and the other colonists were assembled at the usual service. It was just before Christmas, and although winter had begun, the day was so warm and mild that the windows in the large meeting-room stood open.

In the middle of one of Sankey's hymns someone rang the bell at the gateway. It was a very subdued and modest ring, and if the windows had not been open, probably no one would have heard it. One of the young men nearest the door went out to open the gate, and no one took any further notice of it.

Shortly afterwards heavy footsteps were heard slowly and cautiously ascending the marble stairway. When the person ascending reached the last step, he waited for some time. He seemed to hesitate before slowly crossing the marble floor of the large open hall outside the meeting-room. At last he laid his hand on the latch and pressed it down. The door was opened about an inch, when the new-comer again appeared to hesitate.

When the footsteps were first heard, the Dalar peasants almost unconsciously lowered their voices in order to hear better; and now they all turned their faces towards the entrance. That slow, careful way of opening a door they knew so well. They quite forgot where they were, and all at once it seemed to them as if they were sitting at home in Dalarne in one of their own little rooms. But they soon bethought themselves, and looked down at their hymn-books.

The door was now slowly and noiselessly opened without the person standing outside becoming visible. A faint colour rose on the faces of Karin Ingmarsdotter and one or two others, although they endeavoured to collect their thoughts and attend to the singing. But the men began to sing more loudly with their strong bass voices, without troubling about the right key.

At last, when the door was about a foot open, a tall, plain man appeared. His manner was very humble, and, in his anxiety not to disturb the service, he did not venture to go quite into the room, but remained standing just inside the door, with bent head and folded hands.

His clothes were of fine black cloth, but were creased and hung in folds. His cuffs were crumpled, and his hands were large and rough with thick veins. He had a big freckled face, his eyebrows were quite white, his under-lip projected, and there was a strained expression about the mouth.

The moment the new-comer appeared inside the door, Ljung Björn rose from his seat, but went on singing. Immediately all the Dalar peasants, old and young alike, followed Ljung Björn's example. They continued looking at their books, and not a smile passed over their faces; only now and then a stolen glance was taken at the new-comer standing at the door.

But all at once the singing grew stronger, as a fire is quickened by a gust of wind. The four Ingmar daughters, who had all good voices, led, and there came a jubilant vigour over the singing as never before. And the Americans looked with astonishment at the Dalar peasants, who unwittingly had all begun to sing in Swedish.



## BOOK II



## CHAPTER I

### BARBRO SVENSDOTTER

THE day after Ingmar's arrival in Jerusalem Karin Ingmarsdotter was sitting alone in her room as usual. In her joy at seeing Ingmar again, she had remained the whole of the previous evening in the meeting-room, and had taken part in the conversation. But now her usual dejection had returned; she sat erect in Halvor's easy-chair, gazing straight before her, doing nothing.

Then someone opened the door and Ingmar entered. Karin did not notice him until he stood quite close to her. She felt embarrassed that her brother should find her sitting like this, without any work in her hands. The colour came into her cheeks, and she hastily took up some knitting.

Ingmar sat down on a chair, but did not look at Karin. It now occurred to her that the previous evening they had only spoken about what concerned the colony in Jerusalem, and that he had not told them anything about himself or why he had come to Jerusalem. 'It must be this he has come to tell me,' thought Karin.

Ingmar moved his lips once or twice as if to begin a conversation, but no words came. In the meantime Karin sat looking at him. 'It is really dreadful how old he has grown,' she thought. 'Father, old as he was, had not deeper wrinkles in his forehead. Either Ingmar must have been ill, or he must have had some very heavy trouble since I last saw him.'

Karin wondered what could have happened to Ingmar. She had a vague recollection that her sisters had once read aloud something from a letter that had reference to him, but she had been so engrossed with her own sorrow that anything happening in the outer world did not seem to concern her. She tried now in her own quiet way to get Ingmar to tell her how things had gone with him and why he had come to Jerusalem. 'It is nice of you to come in and see me, so that I can hear how things are going on in the parish,' she said.

'Yes,' answered Ingmar, 'I thought there might be several things which you would like to hear about.'

'They have always been accustomed at home,' said Karin, speaking slowly, as if trying to master something that had long been absent from her mind, 'to have someone to lead them; first it was father, then it was Halvor, then for a long time it was the schoolmaster. I have been wondering who it is now.' When Karin said this, Ingmar looked down and sat quite still with an immovable face. 'Perhaps now it is the Pastor?' Karin guessed. Ingmar sat as straight as ever without answering. But Karin went on: 'Or more likely it is Ljung Björn's brother Per who is now the foremost man in the parish.' But Ingmar made no reply this time, either. 'I know,' she began again, 'that it used to be the master of Ingmars' Farm who would lead the parish, but one can't expect that they should allow themselves to be ruled by such a young man as you are.' She made no further remark, and at last Ingmar spoke.

'You know that I am too young to become a member of the Parish Council and the District Council.'

'One can have influence over people without holding so many offices,' said Karin.

'Yes,' Ingmar answered, 'one can.'

When Ingmar said this, a thrill of pleasure went through Karin. 'Oh,' she thought to herself, 'I don't care about these things any longer;' but yet she could not help feeling pleased that the old power and influence of the family had passed on to Ingmar. She straightened herself and spoke in a less subdued voice than before. 'I quite expected that people would come round and admit that it was right of you to take over the farm.'

Ingmar looked searchingly at Karin. He understood what was in her mind. She had been afraid that the people of the village would have despised him because he had thrown Gertrud over. 'God has not punished me in that way,' he said.

'If it isn't that, he must have had some other sore trouble,' thought Karin. She sat for a long time meditating over this. It was only with great difficulty that she could call to mind the thoughts and feelings she had had in the old country. 'Is there still anyone in the parish who has remained faithful to our teaching?' asked Karin.

'Perhaps one or two; I don't think there are more.'

'I have always thought that there might be others who would receive the call from God and follow us here,' she said, looking at Ingmar inquiringly.

'No,' said Ingmar; 'no others have been called, as far as I know.'

'Yesterday, when I saw you, I thought that perhaps you had experienced God's mercy,' said Karin.

'No, that is not why I have come here.'

Karin was silent for a little before she again began with her questions. She now asked more hesitatingly, as if afraid of the answer she might get: 'I suppose the people at home no longer think about us who are so far away?'

To this Ingmar answered, with some embarrassment: 'People are not so grieved about it now as they were to begin with.'

'Then, they were grieved?' said Karin. 'I almost thought that it would have been a relief for them to get rid of us.'

'Yes, indeed we were grieved, and missed you sadly,' Ingmar said more warmly. 'It was a long time before your old neighbours could get accustomed to the new-comers. I know that Börs Berit Persdotter, who was Ljung Björn's neighbour, went every night in the winter and walked round the house where they used to live.'

Karin's next question came very reluctantly. 'Then, I suppose Börs Berit has been the one to grieve the most?'

'Oh no!' said Ingmar in a hard voice. 'There was someone else who every evening in the autumn, when it was dark, rowed down the river as far as the schoolmaster's, and sat on a stone by the riverside, where Gertrud used to sit and watch the sun rise.'

Karin thought that now she had found out why Ingmar had grown so old, and she hastened to change the subject. 'I suppose your wife is looking after the farm whilst you are away?' she asked.

'Yes,' answered Ingmar.

'Is she a clever housewife?' continued Karin.

'Yes,' Ingmar again answered.

Karin smoothed the creases in her apron before she again spoke. She seemed to remember now that she had heard her sisters say something about Ingmar and his wife not getting on very well together. 'Have you no children?' she asked at last.

'No,' said Ingmar, 'we have no children.'

Karin could not find anything more to say; she kept smoothing her apron. She could not persuade herself to ask Ingmar straight out why he had come to Jerusalem; they never used to do that kind of thing at Ingmars' Farm.

Then Ingmar himself came to the rescue. 'Barbro and I are going to be divorced,' he said in a hard voice.

Karin started. All at once she became the Karin of former days, when she was still mistress of Ingmars' Farm. Her old feelings and prejudices rose within her. 'The Lord preserve us!' she exclaimed. 'No one in our family has ever been divorced.'

'It is all settled,' said Ingmar. 'At the last autumn sessions we were separated, to live apart for a year. When the year is over, we shall have to apply for a proper divorce.'

'What have you against her?' asked Karin. 'You will never be able to find a more respected or well-to-do wife.'

'I have nothing against her,' Ingmar said evasively.

'Is it she who wants to be divorced?'

'Yes,' said Ingmar, 'it is she who wants to be divorced.'

'If you had behaved to her as you ought to have done, she would not have wanted a divorce,' said Karin angrily. Karin grasped hold of the arm of the chair. She was much agitated; one could gather that from the fact of her now suddenly beginning to speak about Halvor. 'It is a good thing father and Halvor are dead, that they have not lived to see this,' she said.

'Yes; those who are dead are to be envied,' said Ingmar.

'And now you have come here for Gertrud's sake!' Karin exclaimed. Ingmar did not answer—only bowed his head. 'I am not surprised that you are ashamed of yourself,' said his sister.

'I was more ashamed of myself on the day of the auction at Ingmars' Farm.'

'What do you think people will say about your setting off to propose to a new wife before you have been properly divorced from the old?'

'There was no time to be lost,' said Ingmar in a low voice. 'I was obliged to come over here to look after Gertrud. A letter came saying she was nearly going out of her mind.'

'It was not necessary for you to trouble about her,' said Karin hotly. 'There are people here who are far more capable of looking after Gertrud than you.'

They were both silent for a while. Then Ingmar got up. 'I had not expected our conversation to end like this,' he said, and now there was so much dignity in his bearing that Karin involuntarily felt the same respect for him that she had always felt for her father. 'I have greatly wronged both Gertrud and her parents, who have been like a father and mother to me. I thought that you would have helped me to make what amends I could.'

'You only make matters worse by leaving your lawful wife,' said Karin indignantly.

She tried to keep up her anger by sharp words. She began to be afraid that Ingmar might make her look upon things from his point of view.

Ingmar did not answer her remark about his wife. He only said: 'I thought you would approve of my trying to walk in the ways of God.'

'Do you expect me to say that you would be walking in the ways of God by leaving wife and home to run after your old sweetheart?'

Ingmar walked quietly towards the door. He looked tired and miserable, but showed no signs of anger. He did not look like a man under the influence of a great and irresistible passion.

'If Halvor were alive, he would advise you to go back again and make it up with your wife,' said Karin.

'The time is over for me to be guided by any human advice,' said Ingmar.

Karin got up from her chair. Her anger rose again at the thought that Ingmar could believe that by doing this he was walking in the ways of God. 'I do not believe that Gertrud any longer thinks about you in the way she used to,' she exclaimed.

'I am quite aware that no one in the colony thinks about marriage,' Ingmar said, 'but I mean to try, all the same.'

'Of course,' Karin interrupted him, 'you need not trouble about what we who belong to the colony have promised each other, but I expect it will make more impression upon you when I tell you that I believe Gertrud is now fond of someone else.'

Ingmar was standing quite close to the door. When he heard Karin's words, he stood fumbling with the door, as if he could not find the latch, but he did not turn his head.

Karin immediately repented what she had said. 'The Lord preserve me from saying that any of us should love anyone with an earthly love,' she said; 'but I believe that Gertrud now loves the humblest of the brethren in the colony more than she does you, who do not belong to it.'

Ingmar sighed deeply, hastily opened the door, and went out.

Karin Ingmarsdotter sat for a while lost in melancholy thoughts. Then she rose from her chair, smoothed her hair, tied her kerchief, and went out to find Mrs. Gordon.

Karin told Mrs. Gordon straight out why Ingmar had come. She advised her not to allow Ingmar to remain in the colony, if she did not wish to lose one of the sisters. But whilst Karin was speaking, Mrs. Gordon happened to look out of the window.

She saw Ingmar leaning against the wall, looking more heavy and helpless than ever. Something like a smile passed over Mrs. Gordon's face.

She said to Karin that she was averse to sending anyone away from the colony, most of all one who had come such a great distance, and who had so many near relations amongst the colonists. 'If it were God's will to try Gertrud,' she said, 'they should be careful not to interfere.'

Karin was surprised at this answer. In her eagerness she went close up to Mrs. Gordon, and so near the window that she could see at whom Mrs. Gordon was smiling. But what Karin saw was how like Ingmar had grown to his father; and however indignant she might be with Ingmar, it vexed her that Mrs. Gordon could not see that he, who looked like this, was a man worth more than others, and wiser and cleverer than other people.

'Oh, well,' she said, 'it does not matter very much whether you let him stay or not, for he will in any case manage to have his own way.'

The same evening most of the colonists were assembled in the large room, where they were sitting very comfortably and contentedly. Some of them were watching the children playing; others were discussing what had occurred during the day; others, again, were gathered in a corner reading aloud from some American periodical. When Ingmar Ingmarsson saw the large, well-lighted room, and all the happy and contented faces, he could not help thinking: 'There is no doubt of the Dalar peasants being happy here, and that they do not long for home. These Americans understand much better how to make things comfortable for themselves and others than we do. I can see that it is the good home life which enables the colonists to bear all want and sorrow. It seems hard enough that those who once had a whole farm must now put up with a single room; but, then, in return they are happier and more cheerful than before. And, then, they have learned and seen heaps of things: I believe the youngest child here knows more than I do, let alone the grown-up people.'

Several of the peasants came up to Ingmar, and asked him if he did not think they were very comfortable.

'Yes,' replied Ingmar. He was bound to admit they were.

'I suppose you thought we lived in caves,' said Ljung Björn.

'Oh no; I knew it was not so bad as all that,' Ingmar answered.

'We heard someone had spread this report about us at home.'



That evening everybody wanted to hear from Ingmar how things were going on at home. One after another they came and sat down by him to question him about their relatives. Nearly everybody asked after old Eva Gunnarsdotter. 'She is hale and hearty,' said Ingmar; 'whenever she meets anybody she talks about the Hellgumians.'

Ingmar noticed a young man who kept close to him the whole evening without speaking to him. 'Who can that fellow be, I wonder, who is so much like me?' Ingmar thought; 'and why does he look so angry and as if he would like to turn me out?' At last it occurred to him that it must be his cousin Bo, who had been in America several years.

Ingmar went up to Bo, and gave him a message from his parents. Bo first asked a question or two about his home, and then he wanted to know how the schoolmaster was. This question produced a dead silence in the circle round Ingmar. No one had yet dared to mention Storm to him. Ingmar noticed that one or two of the others made signs to Bo that he should talk about something else. Ingmar answered very quietly that the schoolmaster was quite well, and meant to resign next year; and then he added: 'It is funny to hear you making such kind inquiries about Storm, considering how he treated you when you were at school.'

They all began to laugh, for they remembered quite well how often Storm had bemoaned Bo's stupidity. Bo turned abruptly round, and walked off without asking any further questions.

Old Corporal Fält had as usual gathered several of the children round him, and was telling them stories. Ingmar had not seen Fält since he had become such a great favourite with the children. He was surprised, and went up to him to hear what he was telling them. The old man was relating that once when he was a boy he had gone and knocked at the church door on a Thursday night and called to the dead.

Märta Ingmarsdotter happened to look at the children who were sitting round Fält, and saw that they had grown quite pale from fear. 'For shame, Fält!' she said severely. 'You should not tell the children such ghost-stories; you had much better tell them something useful and instructive.'

The old man meditated for a little while, then he said: 'I think I will tell you what my mother once told me when she wanted me to give up teasing animals.'

'Yes, do,' said Märta Ingmarsdotter, leaving them; but Ingmar remained listening.

'At home in Dalarna,' said Fält, 'there is a farm called Sorgbacken, and it has got that name because a wicked and reckless man once lived there.' When Fält said this, Ingmar started; he went quite close up to him in order to hear better. 'His only occupation was horse-dealing,' Fält continued. 'He went about everlastingly from fair to fair, changing horses; and he ill-treated his horses shamefully. He was also up to all kinds of cheating and trickery. Sometimes he painted a white spot on the forehead of a horse which people knew had the staggers, in order that they might not recognise it; and sometimes he fed up miserable old hacks, and made them look fat and shiny just long enough to enable him to get rid of them. But he ill-treated his horses worst of all when he was trying to show them off. It seemed then as if he were possessed, and he slashed and whipped the animals in the most merciless manner. Once this man had been at a fair for the whole day without being able to bring about a deal. It was partly owing to his having cheated people so often that they now fought shy of him, and partly because the horse he wanted to dispose of was such a wretched old animal that no one would have it. He drove the poor brute up and down through the crowd in a wild gallop, and slashed it until the blood flowed down the traces; but the more he urged on the horse the less inclined people were to buy it. When evening came, he saw that he would not do any business that day. Before he left the fair, however, he made up his mind that he would have one last try, and he drove the horse at such a furious pace across the marketplace that people thought the horse would come down. As he was tearing along, he caught sight of a man who was driving a handsome black colt, and who drove as fast as he did, without apparently distressing his horse in the least. The horse-dealer had no sooner pulled up and got down than the owner of the other horse came up to him. He was a little, slight man with a narrow face and a pointed beard. He was dressed entirely in black, and neither from the colour nor the cut of his clothes could the horse-dealer see to what parish he belonged. The horse-dealer soon discovered that the little man was a very simple fellow. He told the horse-dealer that he had a brown horse at home, and that he wanted to exchange his black horse to get two of the same colour. "The horse you are driving will make a good match as far as colour goes," he said. "I should not mind having it if it is worth anything; but you must not take advantage of me, and palm off a bad horse upon me, for there is nothing in the world I know less about than horse-dealing." Of course it ended in the horse-

dealer giving him his old hack in exchange for the other's good colt. Never before had he harnessed a finer horse. "Never before has a day begun so badly for me and ended so well," he said as he mounted his gig to drive home. It was only a short distance from the market-place to his house. He reached home in the dusk. As he drove through the gate he saw that several of his friends—horse-dealers from other parishes—stood outside his house waiting for him. They appeared to be in very good spirits, and when he came up they began to shout "Hurrah!" and laugh immoderately. "What are you fellows standing there laughing at?" the horse-dealer asked as he pulled up. "Oh," they said, "we have only been waiting to see whether that chap had managed to palm off his blind colt upon you. We met him as he was driving to the fair, and then he made a wager with us that he could take you in." The horse-dealer jumped down, stood in front of the horse, and struck it a terrible blow between the eyes with the handle of his whip. The horse did not stir to avoid the blow. The men were quite right: the horse was perfectly blind. The horse-dealer grew quite beside himself with rage and anger. Whilst his colleagues went on jeering at him, he unharnessed the horse, seized the reins, and drove it up a steep hill behind the house. He urged it on with shouts and whip, and the horse trotted briskly on, but when it came to the top of the hill it pulled up and would go no further. At the top was a cleft, and below an exceedingly deep and broad gravel-pit, from which the whole district for years had fetched their gravel. The horse must have felt that the ground was undermined, for all of a sudden it refused to go any further. The man whipped up the horse and urged it on; the horse grew more and more restive, it rose on its hind-legs, but go forward it would not. At last, in its despair, it made a long jump, as if it thought it were only a ditch, expecting to reach the other side. But there was no other side to be reached, and when it could find no footing it gave a loud and terrible scream, and the next moment it lay with broken neck at the bottom of the pit. The horse-dealer did not even take the trouble to look at it; he went back to his friends. "Well, have you finished laughing?" he said. "You had better be off now, and tell the man who made the bet with you what has happened to his colt." But listen, children; this is not the end of the story,' Fält continued. 'And now you must listen to what happened afterwards. Some time after that man's wife had a son, and he was a poor idiot, and he was also blind. But this was not all, for every son that was born to the man was blind and

an idiot, but the daughters were clever and good-looking, and married well.'

Ingmar had been standing listening the whole time as if under a spell. Now he made a movement as if to tear himself away, but when the old corporal went on with his tale he remained all the same. 'And even this is not all,' the old man continued, 'for when the daughters married and had children, all their sons were blind and were idiots, but their daughters were handsome and strong and clever. And this has gone on to this very day,' said the old man: 'the sons of anyone who has married a daughter from that family have been idiots; and this is why people have called that farm *Sorgbacken*,\* and I should not think it will ever be called by any other name.'

When Fält had finished his story, Ingmar suddenly went up to Ljung Björn and asked him if he could get him a pen and some paper. Björn looked a little surprised. Ingmar said he had an important letter to write. He had quite forgotten it during the daytime; but if he could get it written this evening, he could send it off by the first train in the morning. Ljung Björn got him what he wanted, and, in order that no one might disturb Ingmar, he took him to the carpenter's shop. Here he lighted a lamp, and placed a chair before the planing-table. 'You can sit here in peace, and write the whole night if you like,' he said as he went away.

When Ingmar was alone, he stretched out his arms as one does when longing greatly for someone, and he groaned aloud. 'I don't think I can bear it,' he said. 'I shall never be able to carry through what I have taken upon myself. Night and day I can only think of her I have left behind me,' he continued; 'and the worst of it is, I do not think I can be of any use to Gertrud.' He sat lost in thought; then a smile came over his face. 'He who is full of tormenting doubts sees signs and omens everywhere, I suppose. But, all the same, it was strange that Fält should just happen to tell that tale; it really seemed as if God would show me what was the right thing to do.' He sat for a little while thinking matters over; then he seized the pen. 'In God's name, then,' he said, and put his pen to the paper.

The letter Ingmar was now going to write had been in his mind ever since he left home. It was addressed to the old Pastor at home, and it did not contain one word which had not been well thought over and weighed in his mind over and over again. But although the letter was addressed to the Pastor, it

\* "The Hill of Sorrow."—J. B.

was not by any means intended for him alone. During the whole of his journey Ingmar felt that he had never really talked matters over with his wife, never really been able to tell her what he had thought and felt, and that he ought once to tell her how things really were with him. He had made up his mind that the best way in which he could do this was to write to the Pastor. But it was not an easy thing for him to write, either ; he could not quite get over the shyness which always prevented him from talking about himself. But that evening it suddenly became clear to him what he should write ; he felt happier, and thought : In that way it will not be so difficult ; in that way I can do it ; now I know how to set about telling the Pastor all he requires to know in order to plead my cause with Barbro.

Ingmar's letter ran as follows :

' Whilst I am sitting here all alone writing, there is nothing I wish more sincerely than that I could go up to the Parsonage, and have a talk with your reverence. I should like best to come to your reverence late in the evening, when you are sitting, quiet and undisturbed, in your study, thinking over your sermon.

' I think that the first moment your reverence saw me you would be frightened, thinking I was a ghost knocking at the door. "What are you doing here? I thought you had gone to Jerusalem," your reverence would be sure to say.

' "Yes," I would then answer ; "I should have been there by this time, but I turned back on the way, because I have heard a story which I should like to tell your reverence."

' And then I would beg your reverence so earnestly to have patience with me for an hour or two, and let me tell you a long story which I am most anxious to confide in you. And when I had got your reverence's permission, I should begin in this way :

' Once upon a time there was a man in this parish (I would say) who did not love his wife. It was because he had been obliged to give up someone of whom he was very fond, and take the other, in order to keep his father's farm. But when he made that bargain he had only thought of the farm ; he forgot that a wife had to go with the farm. And when they were married, and went to live together at the farm, he still seemed not to realize that the wife belonged to him. He never gave a thought as to how things might be with her, whether she were content or not. Neither did he notice how she managed her house, whether things went well or ill. He thought so much about the other one that he simply did not remember this one's existence. She

was like so many other useless utensils that went with the farm. She had to look out for herself as best she could; he could not bother about her.

‘But there was also another reason why the husband felt no esteem for his wife. He despised her because she would take him who loved another woman. “There must be something or other the matter with her,” he thought, “since her father had been obliged to buy her a husband in this way.”

‘If this man ever took any notice of his wife, it was only in order to compare her with the one whom he had lost. He could not help seeing that his wife was good-looking, but she was not so beautiful as the one he had lost. Her walk was not so light, and she did not move her hands so prettily, and she was not able to talk about so many nice and entertaining things. She went about quietly and patiently, and attended to her work; that was all she was good for.

‘I must, however, in justice to the man, admit that he could not speak to her about what was most in his thoughts. He could not confide in her that he was always thinking of his heart’s dearest, who had gone away to a strange land. Of course he could not do that. And he did not think that he could speak to her, either, about his constantly expecting that punishment from God, which was sure to overtake him because he had broken his word, and that he was afraid of thinking about his own father in Heaven, and fancied that everybody thought badly of him for what he had done. Everybody who spoke to him certainly showed him much respect, but he was so dejected that he suspected everybody of making fun of him as soon as his back was turned, and of saying that he was not worthy of the name he bore, and much more of the same kind.

‘And now I will relate how it came about that this man first noticed that he had a wife:

‘When they had been married a month or two, it happened that the man and his wife were invited to a wedding by some of their relations who lived in the wife’s old parish. It was a long drive, and they were obliged to put up at an inn for an hour or so to bait the horse. The weather was bad, and the wife went upstairs, and waited in one of the spare rooms. The man watered his horse, and gave it some oats, and then went up to the room where his wife was waiting. He did not speak to her, but only sat thinking how hard it was to go about amongst people, and that people at the wedding would be sure to let him see what they thought of him. Whilst he was thus sitting

tormenting himself, it struck him that his wife was to blame for all this. "If she had not wanted to marry me," he thought, "I should have been all right now. I should not have been exposed to that temptation, and I need not have been afraid of looking an honourable man in the face."

'The man had never before thought that he could come to hate his wife, but at that moment he thought he did do so. He soon, however, had other things to think about. Some men had come into the room next to theirs. They had probably seen the man and his wife as they drove up, and they now began to talk about them, and the walls were so thin in that house that the man and his wife could hear every word they said.

' "I wonder how those two are getting on," said one of the men.

" "I never expected that Barbro Svensdotter would get married," chimed in another.

' "I remember quite well how sweet she was on Stig Börjesson, who one summer three or four years ago was in service at Berger's Farm."

' When the wife heard that they were talking about her, she said hastily: "Is it not time we were off?" But the man did not want the strangers to think that he and his wife had been sitting in the next room, listening. He would rather remain there until they had gone.

'The men in the other room went on talking about the wife. "That Stig Börjesson was a poor penniless fellow, and as soon as Berger Sven Persson found out that his daughter was fond of him, he sent him away at once," said one who seemed to know all about it. "But then Barbro grew so ill from grief that the old man was obliged to give way, and drive with Stig to the Pastor to arrange for the banns being published. But the strangest part of the story was that, when the banns had been published the first time, Stig changed his mind, and said he did not want to marry. Then it was Sven Persson's turn, for his daughter's sake, to beg and pray Stig not to forsake her. But Stig was not to be moved; he said he hated Barbro, and never wanted to see her again. He went about saying that he never had cared for Barbro, but that it was she who had run after him.

'When the men went on talking in this way, your reverence can understand that the man felt very much ashamed, and he did not dare to look at his wife; but he felt that, when they had sat and listened to all this, they could not possibly go through the other room.

"It was shameful of Stig," said one of the others, "but he has also lived to repent it."

"That he has," said one who had not before spoken. "He went and married the first girl that would have him. It was only to show everybody that he did not care for Barbro. She turned out to be a bad wife, and it all ended in poverty and misery, and now he has taken to drinking. Both he and his family would have been in the workhouse long ago if Barbro had not helped them. It is she who gives both him and his wife food and clothing—everybody knows that."

"They did not say any more about Barbro, and soon after they went away. The man then went out to harness the horse, and when his wife came down to get into the carriage, he took and lifted her on to the seat. She probably thought he only did it to prevent her from soiling her dress on the wheel, but it was really because he wanted to show her how sorry he was for her. And as they drove along he turned every now and then to look at her. Had she really such a tender heart that she would help the man who had treated her so shamefully? And it was strange to think that she had been forsaken as well as Gertrud.

"When they had driven some distance, the man noticed that his wife was crying. "You must not cry for that," he said; "there is nothing strange in you also having cared for another." Afterwards he was sorry that he had not been able to say a friendly word to her.

"One would have thought that the man from that time would now and again have been a little curious as to whether his wife still cared for that Stig, but it never occurred to him. He did not trouble himself enough about her to think of whom she did or did not care for. He was wrapt up in his own sorrowful thoughts, and as often as not forgot that she existed. Neither was he surprised that she was always so gentle and quiet, and was never hasty with him, although he did not treat her as he ought to have done.

"Your reverence must know that this stillness, which was always over her, at last made the man think that she did not even know what was troubling him. But then one evening in the autumn, when they had been married about six months, and the weather was very cold and wet, the man, who had been out since dusk, came home very late. In the big room where the servants slept it was pitch dark; but in the little room there was a large fire on the hearth. The wife was up, and the supper, which was better than usual, was on the table. When her husband



came in, she said to him : "You must take your coat off ; it is quite wet." She helped him off with it, and held it to the fire to dry. "Dear me, how wet it is !" she said ; "I really don't know how I shall manage to get it dry by to-morrow morning."

"Where have you been in such weather ?" she said after a while. This was the first time she had ever asked him anything of the kind ; he was silent, and wondered why she should suddenly have begun to question him. "People say that every evening you row down to the school-house and sit on a stone by the riverside, and don't stir for several hours."

"People will talk," said the man, looking just as unconcerned as before ; but it annoyed him, all the same, that he had been watched.

"But it is not so nice for a wife to hear that kind of thing."

"Oh," answered the man, "a wife who has had to buy herself a husband must put up with that kind of thing."

The wife stood trying to turn one of the coat-sleeves inside out ; it was wadded and very stiff, and it was not an easy task. The husband looked up to see how she took it. He saw there was a little smile on her face. When she had at last managed the sleeve, she said : "It was not I who was so keen about getting married ; it was father who brought that about."

The man again looked at his wife, and when his eyes met hers he thought : "She looks as if she knew what she wanted." "I don't think you look like one whom it would be easy to manage," he said.

"Perhaps not," said the wife ; "but father is not easy to get over. The fox he can't hunt with a dog he takes in a snare."

The man did not answer ; he was again buried in his own thoughts, and hardly heard what she said. But his wife evidently thought that, as she had begun, she had better continue. "Father, you know, has always been so very fond of Ingmars' Farm, where he had lived in his childhood. He was always talking about the Ingmarssons and Ingmars' Farm. There is no place in the world I have heard so much talk about ; and I believe I know more about all the people who have lived here than you do."

When his wife had got thus far in her story, the husband got up from the table where he had been having his supper, and came and sat down by the hearth, with his back to the fire, so that he could see her face.

"Then, all that happened, which you know about," said the wife.

"You need not tell me about that," said the man quickly. He

felt ashamed when he remembered how he had behaved to her that day at the inn.

"But when Stig had deserted me, father was so afraid that no one would have me, that he offered me first to one man and then to the other. That was more than I could stand; I was not such a poor thing that it was necessary for him to beg people to marry me."

'As she said this, the man noticed she straightened herself. She threw the coat on to a chair and looked steadily at him. "I did not know how to put a stop to all this," she continued; "but one day it occurred to me to say to father, 'I will never marry unless I can have Ingmar Ingmarsson of Ingmars' Farm.' When I said this, I knew just as well as everybody else that Tims Halvor was the owner of Ingmars' Farm, and that you were going to marry the schoolmaster's Gertrud. I had only said this because I knew that it was quite impossible, and so as to be allowed to live in peace. Father was at first very much taken aback. 'Then, you will never be married,' he said. 'Very well, that is my own look out,' I said. 'But all the same I could see father liked the idea.' 'Can I rely upon you?' he said shortly afterwards. 'Yes, that you can, father.' You can surely understand that I never for a moment dreamt that he could arrange anything of the kind. It seemed as impossible as it would be for me to marry the King."

"Then for several years I was free from any matrimonial plans, and I was content as long as I could remain in peace. I had as good a time as one could wish for. I managed father's big farm, and was allowed to do everything just as I liked as long as he was a widower. But this May father came home late one evening, and at once sent for me. 'Now you can get Ingmar Ingmarsson of Ingmars' Farm,' he said. It was then two years since father had said a single word to me about the matter. 'I rely upon you keeping your word,' he said. 'I have bought the farm for forty thousand kroner.' 'But Ingmar has a sweetheart already,' I said. 'He can't care very much about her, I should say, when he proposes to you.'"

'Your reverence can understand that when the man heard his wife tell him this he felt a little bitter. "What an extraordinary tale is this!" he thought. "This is child's play! To fancy that I have had to give up Gertrud simply because Barbro once in fun said something about me to her father!"

"I did not know what to do," said the wife; "I was also so touched at father having spent so much money for my sake, that I did not know how to say no at once. And I did not know what you wished, whether, perhaps, you loved the farm more than any-

thing else in the world. And father swore that if I did not do as he wished he would sell the farm to the company. And, then, just at that time things were not very comfortable at home. Father had married again for the third time, and I did not like being under a stepmother, when I had been the mistress of the farm. And as I could not make up my mind at once whether I ought to say yes or no, things went as father wanted. You see, I did not take things seriously enough."

"No," said the man; "it seems to me that it has all been play to you."

"I did not realize what I had done until I heard that Gertrud had stolen away from her parents to go to Jerusalem. But from that day I have not had a happy moment. I am not one of those who would willingly do another person harm. And now, when I see how unhappy you are," continued the wife, "I cannot help thinking that it is all my fault."

"No, no," said the man; "I am to blame, and no one else; I am not more unhappy than I deserve to be."

"I don't know how I shall be able to bear the thought that I am the cause of all this misery," said the wife. "Every evening I sit expecting you not to come home. 'It will end with him being found in the river some day,' I think. And then I fancy I can hear them coming into the yard. And I wonder how I shall feel when you are dead—if I shall never be able to forget that I have been the cause of your death!"

Whilst she was thus giving vent to all that had weighed upon her, the man sat busy with his own thoughts. "Now she will want comforting and helping," he thought. He felt it would only add to his troubles now that he knew she was uneasy about him; it was better for him as long as she had kept it all to herself, for then he was not obliged to think about her. "I really can't begin with having to share her troubles," he thought.

He felt that he was obliged to say something. "You must not be uneasy on my account," he said; "I have no intention of adding to my misdeeds." These words from his lips were sufficient to make her face brighten a little.

When Ingmar had written thus far, he put down his pen and looked up. 'This is going to be a terribly long letter,' he thought. 'I shall have to sit here and write all night.' But in reality he felt it was a pleasure to live over again all that had passed between him and Barbro. He could not help hoping the Pastor would show her the letter, and that she would be touched when she saw how he remembered everything.

'But although the man thought that he did not care in the least about his wife,' Ingmar continued writing, 'he stopped at home all the same the first two or three evenings after she had told him how uneasy she was. The wife appeared not to know that it was for her sake he remained in the house; she went about quietly and silently as usual. But, as your reverence knows, she (Barbro) had always been very good to the old people who lived at Ingmars' Farm. They were all in love with her. When the man stopped at home and sat beside the fire in the big room together with all the others, old Lisa and Korp Bengt sat laughing to each other all the time.

'For two evenings the man managed to stay at home, but the third evening was a Sunday, and his wife, to while away the time, took out her guitar and began to sing. All went well for a time, but then the wife began to sing a song that Gertrud had been in the habit of humming. Then the man could not bear it any longer; he took his hat and left the room.

'When the man got outside, it was as dark as in a cave, and it was raining—a cold, fine rain—but this was just the sort of weather he liked. He rowed down to the school-house, and sat down on a stone close to the river, and thought of Gertrud and of the time when he had not yet broken his promise, but was an honest and honourable man. He sat there so long that it was more than eleven before he got back. He found his wife sitting by the riverside waiting for him.

'The man felt annoyed at this. Your reverence knows that men never like the women to worry about them. He did not say anything to his wife before they got into the little room. "I can tell you I mean to come and go as I like," he said; and she could hear from his voice that he was vexed. She made no reply, but hastened to strike a match and light the candle. The man then saw that she was wet through; her clothes were clinging to her. She went to fetch his supper, lighted a fire on the hearth, and made the beds ready for the night, her wet clothes dripping all the time. "I should like to know if she is really so meek that nothing could make her angry," thought the man.

'He suddenly turned round and asked: "If I had done the same to you as I did to Gertrud, would you forgive me?"

'She looked straight at him for a moment. "No," was all she answered, but her eyes flashed as she said it.

'The man sat in silence. "I wonder why she would not forgive me," he thought; "but I suppose she thinks that it made matters worse because I gave up Gertrud for the sake of what I got by it."

'A day or two later the man happened to have mislaid his screw-driver. He looked for it everywhere—he looked for it in the little chamber behind the brewing-room, where old Lisa lay ill in bed, and Barbro sat by her bedside reading aloud from the Bible. It was a big old Bible with brass mountings and a thick leather binding. The man stood for a little looking at them. "Barbro must have brought that from her old home," he thought, and left the room. But he went back again, took the Bible from his wife, opened it, and looked at the first page. He now saw that it was one of the old Bibles which had belonged to the farm, and which Karin had allowed to be sold at the auction. "Where has this book come from?" asked the man.

'The wife said nothing, but old Lisa answered: "Did Barbro never tell you that she bought back that Bible?"

"Did Barbro buy it back?" said the man.

"She has done more than that," said old Lisa eagerly. "Go and look in the cupboard in the big room."

'The man went out quickly through the brewing-room and into the big room. When he opened the cupboard, he saw two of the old silver beakers standing on the shelf. He took them out, and turned them upside down to look at the marks on the bottom, and saw that they were the right ones. Barbro came in as he was standing there; she looked rather embarrassed.

"I had a little money in the savings-bank," she said softly.

'The man was more pleased than he had been for many a long day. He went up to her and took her hand. "Thank you heartily for having done this." But almost immediately he drew back his hand and went out. He had a feeling as if it were wrong to be kind to his wife. He thought he owed that much to Gertrud, not to show any love or kindness to the one who had taken her place.

'It was about a week after that had happened. The man was coming from the barn and going towards the dwelling-house. At that moment a stranger opened the gate and went into the yard. When the two met, the stranger saluted, and asked whether Barbro Svensdotter were at home. "I am an old friend of hers," he said.

'Strange to say, the man knew at once who it was. "Then, you are Stig Börjesson?" he said.

"I did not think anyone here would know me. I am going away again directly—I only want to have a word or two with Barbro; but please don't tell Ingmar Ingmarsson that I have been here. He would perhaps not like me to come here."

"Oh, I think Ingmar would like to see you," said the man. "he has long been wanting to see what such a scoundrel looks like." He was quite beside himself with anger at the thought that such a miserable scamp should still go about trying to make people believe that Barbro Svensdotter was fond of him.

"No one has ever called me a scoundrel before that I know of," said Stig.

"If no one has done it before, then I do now," said the man, giving him a box on the ear.

Stig Börjesson started back; he went as white as a corpse and looked dreadful in his anger. "Let me alone," he said; "you don't know what you are doing. I only wanted to borrow a little money from Barbro; that was my only errand."

The man felt a little ashamed at his hastiness; he could not quite understand himself why he had flared up like that. But he could not persuade himself to show any regret before that fellow, and therefore went on in an angry voice: "Don't imagine that I am afraid of Barbro being fond of you; but I think you deserved that box on the ears because of the way in which you have behaved to her."

Stig Börjesson went close up to the man. "I will tell you something in return for your having struck me," he said, and his voice came hoarse and threatening. "I think what I am going to tell you will smart more than a thrashing. As you appear to be so much in love with Barbro, let me tell you that she comes of the horse-dealer's family at Sorgbacken."

He stood watching what effect this would have upon the man, who only looked a little surprised. At first he could not call to mind what there was remarkable about Sorgbacken, but at last he remembered the story he had heard as a child, and which, I suppose, your reverence has also heard, that all the sons born of the family from Sorgbacken were blind and idiots, but that all the daughters were better and cleverer than other people. But he had never thought that there was a grain of truth in that story. He only laughed at Stig.

"I see you don't believe that story," said Stig, coming still closer; "but I tell you Sven Persson's second wife belonged to that family. All the members of the family from Sorgbacken have gone to live in another part of the country, where no one knows what is wrong with them; but my mother knew all about the family. But she kept quiet about it, and never told anybody who Sven Persson's wife was, before I was going to marry Barbro. And when I heard that I could not marry her, but, as an honourable

an, I said nothing about it. Had I been a scoundrel, I should have told it to everybody. I have had enough hard things said to me on that account, but I have borne it in silence until you ruck me. Sven Persson himself never knew from what sort of family his wife had come, for she died after her child was born. And the daughters of the family from Sorgbacken are right enough, for your information; it is only the sons who are blind liots. And now you can lie on your bed as you have made it. I have had many a good laugh, I can tell you, when I thought of how you had thrown over your old sweetheart, and when I thought of the Ingmar Ingmarsson who will reign over the farm after you. And I don't think you will have many happy days with your wife now you have heard all this."

"When Stig had hissed all this into his face, the man chanced to look towards the house. And he saw a corner of a dress behind the door. He guessed that Barbro must have gone into the entrance when she saw her husband and Stig meet in the yard. And there she had stood and heard everything. Then the man grew concerned in earnest, and it flashed upon him that it was a great misfortune that Barbro should have heard all this. "Can it be possible," he thought, "that what I have feared so long has come at last? Can this be the punishment from God that I have been expecting?"

"But as this thought rushed through the man's brain he felt for the first time that he really had a wife, and that it was his duty to protect her. Therefore he forced himself to laugh again, and pretend that what the man had said had not made the slightest impression upon him. "It was a lucky thing that I heard that story, or else I should have borne a grudge against you."

"Oh, indeed?" said Stig, "is that how you take it?"

"You surely don't expect me to be as silly as you have been, and spoil my happiness for the sake of a stupid old superstition."

"Oh, well, I won't say any more to-day," said Stig. "But I should like to see if you are as confident in a year's time."

"Won't you come in and speak to Barbro?" said the man, when he saw the other was about to go.

"No, I would rather not," said Stig.

"When Stig had gone, the man at once went into the house to speak to his wife. She stood inside the door, waiting for him, and before he had time to say a word she said quite calmly: "You don't think, Ingmar, that we ought to believe in such nursery tales, do you? What can it matter to us what happened more than a hundred years ago, if ever it did happen?"

"You heard, then, what he said," said the man; he did not want her to know that he had seen her standing at the door listening.

"Of course I have heard that old story, as everyone else has, but I did not know before to-day that it had anything to do with me."

"It was a pity you heard it," said the man, "but it does not matter as long as you don't believe in it."

The wife laughed. "I have never noticed that there was any curse resting on me." The man thought he had never seen anyone better looking than his wife. "I think everyone will give you the credit of being sound both in mind and body."

In the spring a little child was born to the man and his wife. She had been very brave all the time, and never shown any sign of anxiety. The man often thought that she must have forgotten all that Stig had said. As for himself, after their talk he no longer allowed his grief to get the better of him. It was always in his mind that he must behave so that his wife could see that he did not believe in the curse which was supposed to rest upon her. He did his best always to show a happy face when in the house, and not go about looking as if he were waiting for God's punishment to come upon him. He began to take a keen interest in the working of the farm, and he was helpful to people, as his father had been before him. "It won't do for me any longer to go about looking unhappy," thought the man. "For if I do, Barbro will think I believe in the curse, and that I am unhappy on that account."

The man's wife was exceedingly glad for her child. It was a boy, a fine handsome little fellow; he had a high, straight forehead and large, clear eyes. She was always calling for her husband to come and look at the child: "He is a splendid boy, Ingmar; there is nothing the matter with him," she said. The man was quite shy and dare not touch the child. "And now you shall see that there is nothing the matter with his eyes, either," said the wife. She lighted a candle and passed it backwards and forwards before the child's face. "Can you see, Ingmar, his eyes follow the light?" she said.

It was some days after. The man's wife was up, and her father and stepmother had come to see the child. The stepmother took the child out of the cradle and weighed him, as it were, in her arms. "He is a big child," she said, looking pleased. But in a little she began to examine the child's head. "Hasn't he got a very big head?" she said.



"All the children in our family have big heads," said the man.

"You are sure there is nothing the matter with him?" asked the stepmother, laying the child down again.

"Oh no," said the wife; "he grows with every day."

"Are you quite sure," said the stepmother shortly afterwards, "that the child can see? It is always showing the whites of its eyes."

"The wife grew pale and began to shake. Her lips trembled.

"If you will try with a candle," said the man, "you will soon see that there is nothing the matter with its eyes."

"The wife hastened to light a candle, and held it before the child's eyes. "Of course it can see," she said, doing her best to look hopeful and glad. The child lay still in its cradle with the whites of its eyes turned up. "Look how he turns his eyes to the light," said the mother. None of the others said anything. "Can you not see that he moves his eyes?" she said to the stepmother, but she made no reply. "He is sleepy now," said Barbro; "he is closing his eyes."

"In a little while the stepmother began again: "What are you going to call him?" she asked.

"In this house we have always been in the habit of calling the eldest son Ingmar," said the man.

"His wife hastily interrupted him: "I have been thinking I would ask you if he might not be called Sven, after my father."

"An awkward silence followed upon this remark. The man could see that his wife was watching him attentively, although she appeared to be looking down.

"No," said the man; "I know that your father, Sven Persson, is a very clever man, but our eldest child shall have no other name but Ingmar."

"And one night, when the child was about a week old, it had a fit, and was dead before morning."

Again Ingmar stopped writing. He looked at his watch; it was long past midnight. "I can hardly bear to write this," he said. "I wonder if the Pastor will really understand how terrible it was. And the worst of it all is, we never found out whether there was anything the matter with the child or not."

"I shall have to make short work with the rest of this letter," he thought, "or I shall not get it finished by to-morrow morning."

"Now I must tell your reverence," wrote Ingmar when he again began his letter, "that of late the man had always been good to

Barbro, and at times he had been to her as a young husband generally is to his wife. But he had a feeling that Gertrud had a right to all his love, and he said to himself: "It is not because I am fond of Barbro, but I am obliged to be good to her, because she has that heavy burden to bear. She shall in any case feel that she is not quite alone in the world, but that she has a husband who will take care of her."

'Barbro did not cry very much about the child after it was dead. It almost seemed to be a relief to her that it was taken. After a week or two she appeared to be quite resigned. No one who saw her could have found out whether she was still unhappy, or whether she had again shaken off all painful thoughts.

'Later on in the summer Barbro went to the Säter, and the man was at home alone.

'But now a strange thing happened to him. When he went into the house he felt as if he must go and look for Barbro. Now and then when he was at his work he found himself listening for her voice. It seemed to him as if all comfort had gone out of the house; it did not seem like the same place.

'When Saturday evening came he went to the Säter to see Barbro. He found her sitting on the stone slab outside the house, with her hands in her lap, and although she saw her husband coming, she did not get up to go and meet him. He sat down beside her. "Barbro," he said, "something very strange has happened to me."

"Has there?" she said, without asking what.

"It is this, that I have become very fond of you."

'She looked at him, and he saw that she was so tired that she could hardly raise her eyes. "It is too late now," she said.

'He grew quite frightened when he looked at her. "It is not good for you to be alone here in this lonely place," he said.

"Yes, it is; I am all right here—I should like to stop here as long as I live."

'The man again tried to tell her how much he now loved her, and that he had not a thought for anyone else except her; that he had not known himself how much he loved her until she had gone away from home.

'Barbro answered him with but few words. "You should have told me all that last autumn," she said.

"My God! do you care for nothing now?" he said, looking at her in despair.

"Oh yes!" she said, and she did what she could to look a little brighter.

'One day in August the man again went up to the Säter. "I have sad news for you, Barbro," he said, as soon as he found her.

"What has happened?" she asked.

"Your father is dead."

"That is great news, both for you and for me," she said. Barbro sat down on a stone by the roadside, and gave her husband a sign to sit down beside her. "Now we are free," she said; "now we can do what we like; now we will be divorced." He wanted to stop her, but she would not let him interrupt her. "As long as my father lived, it was no use thinking of such a thing; but now we must at once apply for a separation," she said — "that you can see for yourself."

"No, indeed I cannot," he said.

"I suppose you could see what kind of child it was I bore you?"

"It was a healthy child," he said.

"It was blind, and had it lived it would have been an idiot."

"It is a matter of indifference to me what the child was, but I mean to keep you, all the same." She folded her hands, and the man saw that her lips moved. "Are you thanking God for that?" he asked.

"All the summer I have been praying to be free," she said.

"My God! am I to lose all my happiness for the sake of an old superstition?" he exclaimed.

"It was no superstition," said Barbro; "the child was blind."

"How can anyone tell?" he said. "Had it lived, I am confident it would have been all right."

"But my next child, all the same, would be an idiot, for now I believe in it."

'The man continued to fight his cause.

"It is not only for the child's sake I want to be divorced," she said.

'He asked what else there could be.

"I want you to go to Jerusalem and fetch Gertrud home."

"Never!" he said; "I will never do anything of the kind."

"You must do it for my sake, in order that I can get my peace of mind back again."

'He continued to resist her, and said that what she required him to do was quite impossible.

"You must do it, all the same, because it is right," she said.

"You can see for yourself that, if we continue to live as husband and wife, God will never leave off punishing us." She knew that she would be able to make him give in, because he had an uneasy

conscience. "You should be glad because you have an opportunity of making amends for what you did a year ago," she said, "or otherwise you would have sorrowed over it your whole life." And at last, as he went on raising objections, she said: "You need not be afraid about the farm. You can buy it from me when you come back again; and as long as you are in Jerusalem I shall remain here and look after it for you."

"Then they went back to the farm to arrange about the separation. Things were harder for him now than ever. He could see that Barbro was happy and glad at the thought of getting rid of him. It was her greatest pleasure to speak about how he and Gertrud would have it. Nothing seemed to please her so much as picturing to herself how glad Gertrud would be when he came to Jerusalem to fetch her. Once when she had been talking for a long time about this, it suddenly struck him that Barbro did not like him, or else she would not be everlastingly talking about the time when he and Gertrud would be together. Then he sprang up and struck the table with his clenched fist. "I will go," he shouted, "but don't let me hear you speak of it again!"

"Then all will be well," she said, with a glad smile. "Only remember, Ingmar, I shall never have a happy moment until I know you have made it up with Gertrud."

'And then they went through all that had to be got through: they were admonished by the Pastor, they were admonished by the Parish Council, and at the autumn session they were separated.'

At this point Ingmar gave over writing and laid down his pen. Now the Pastor knew everything. Now there was nothing else left to write about but to ask the Pastor to talk with Barbro, and, above all, try to induce her not to insist upon his marrying Gertrud. After all that had passed, the Pastor must be able to see that it was quite impossible for him. To go to Gertrud now, when he no longer loved her, was but to deceive her a second time.

Whilst Ingmar was thinking about this, his eyes fell upon the words he had just written: 'You must do it for my sake, in order that I can get my peace of mind back again.'

He read over again all that he had written. He thought he was again sitting on the hill in the forest, and could hear Barbro speaking. 'You should be glad because you have an opportunity of making amends for what you did a year ago.' He could hear these words, and all she had said. 'And how can I call what she

asks of me hard, when I compare it with what she herself has to bear?' he said to himself.

It suddenly flashed through his mind that least of all would he like Barbro to see this letter. No, no! then she would find out that he thought he could not bear it. Should he be such a mean coward as to ask her to free him from punishment and atonement?

She had never wavered for a moment from the time she thought she had the right to follow her own convictions. It was she who the whole time had been obliged to compel him to do his duty. And now was she to hear that all the same he had not the strength to do it?

Ingmar collected the sheets of paper and put them in his pocket. 'I don't think it will be necessary to finish this letter,' he said.

He turned down the lamp and left the workshop. He did not look any less dejected and unhappy than before, but now he was fully determined to do as his wife wished him to. As he came out, he noticed a little side-door standing open. It was already daylight. He stood in the gateway and breathed in the fresh air. 'It is hardly the time for going to bed now,' he thought.

The sun's rays were already making their way down the hills, and all the heights seemed to be steeped in a reddish-brown lustre, but all the surroundings seemed to change colour with each succeeding minute.

Down the slopes extending from the Mount of Olives Ingmar could see Gertrud coming. The sunbeams surrounded her, weaving her, too, into their golden net. She walked lightly, as if she were bright and happy, and Ingmar thought it seemed as if all the radiance proceeded from her. And behind Gertrud Ingmar saw a tall young man, following her at some distance. Now and then he stopped and looked the other way, but one could easily see he was watching over Gertrud.

Ingmar was not long in recognising the young man, and it set him thinking. He thought that now he could understand much of what he had seen the preceding day, and a great happiness filled his heart. 'I begin to think that God will help me,' he said.

## CHAPTER II

### THE DERVISH

ONE evening just before dusk Gertrud was walking in the streets of Jerusalem. She accidentally noticed a tall, spare man in a black, flowing mantle; he was walking just in front of her. It seemed to Gertrud as if there were something unusual about him, but she could not quite make out what it was. It could not be because he wore a green turban, which showed him to be a descendant of the Prophet; one could see men wearing that kind of headgear in almost every street. It was rather because his head was not shaved, nor his hair fastened up under his turban, as was the usual custom with the men of the East, but his hair hung down upon his shoulders in long, regular locks.

Gertrud walked behind the man, watching him attentively; she could not help wishing that he would turn round so that she could see his face. Then a young man came towards him, who saluted him with reverence, kissed his hand, and went on his way. The man in the black robe stood still for a moment, and looked after the young man who had saluted him so reverently, and thus Gertrud's wish was gratified.

Gertrud was so overcome with gladness that she nearly lost her breath. She stood motionless, and laid her hand on her heart. 'It is Christ,' she said. 'It is Jesus Christ whom I met at the brook in the forest.'

The man proceeded on his way. Gertrud tried to follow him, but he turned into a crowded street, where she soon lost sight of him. Then Gertrud turned round and went back to the colony. She walked very slowly; she stopped continually, and leant against the wall, and closed her eyes. 'If I could only keep it in my memory,' she murmured, 'if I could only see His face always before me!'

She strove to engrave on her memory what she had just seen. 'His beard was sprinkled with gray,' she repeated to herself; 'it was divided, and rather short. He had a long, narrow face; the

nose was long, and the forehead broad, but not very high. And He was exactly like the Christ I have seen in paintings ; He looked exactly the same as He did when He came to meet me on the pathway in the forest, only He was far more glorious and beautiful. Light seemed to proceed from His eyes, and great power ; but round His eyes there was a deep shadow and many wrinkles. Yes, everything seemed centred in His eyes, both wisdom and love, and sorrow and pity, and something besides, as if those eyes were so far-seeing that they could see through all the heavens, even unto God and His angels.'

On her way home Gertrud was in the greatest ecstasy. Since the day when she had met Christ in the woods she had never felt so completely happy. She walked with folded hands and eyes gazing heavenwards, and she looked as if she no longer walked on earth, but on clouds and blue air.

That she should meet Christ in Jerusalem was of even more significance than that He had shown Himself to her in the wild, lonely forest in Dalarne. There He had glided past her as a vision, but when He appeared to her here, it meant that He had come back to work amongst men. This—that Christ had come—was something so great that she could not at once grasp all that it meant ; but peace and joy and bliss were the first things this certainty had brought to her.

When Gertrud was nearly home she met Ingmar Ingmarsson. He was still wearing his fine black clothes, that suited his rough hands and plain features so badly, and he looked heavy and dejected. From the first moment Gertrud had seen Ingmar here in Jerusalem, she was surprised that in former days she could have been so attached to him. It had also struck her as strange that at home in Sweden she had looked upon him as such a prominent man. Poor as he was, both she and everyone else thought that she could not possibly have made a better marriage. But here in Jerusalem he looked both awkward and peculiar. She could not understand why the people at home had thought him so wonderful.

But at the same time Gertrud had no ill-feeling against Ingmar, and she had wanted to be friendly towards him. But then someone had told her that Ingmar had been separated from his wife, and that he had come to Jerusalem to try and win her again. Then she had become frightened, and thought : ' Now I dare not even talk to him, I shall be obliged to show him that I do not care about him. It will never do for me to let him think for a moment that I would be willing. He has come over here, I

should think, because he feels he has treated me so badly ; but when he sees I no longer care about him, he will soon come to his senses, and go back again.'

But when Gertrud met Ingmar outside the colony, she only thought here was someone to whom she could confide her great and wonderful discovery. She rushed up to him, and cried : ' I have seen Christ !'

Such a joyous cry had surely never been heard on these barren fields and hills outside Jerusalem since the days when the holy women on their return from the empty grave cried out to the Apostles : ' The Lord is risen !'

Ingmar stood still, and looked down, as he always did when he wanted to conceal his thoughts. ' Really,' he said to Gertrud, ' have you seen Christ ?'

Gertrud grew impatient—just as in olden times, when Ingmar could not quickly enough understand her dreams and fancies. She only wished she had met Bo instead of Ingmar : he would have understood her much better. But all the same she began to tell him what she had seen.

Ingmar did not say a single word to indicate that he did not believe her, but, somehow, Gertrud felt that when she began to tell her story there seemed to be so little in it. She had met a man in the street who resembled Christ—that was all. Her story was just like a dream. At the time it had seemed so strange and wonderful, but when she began to speak about it, it all seemed so vague.

Ingmar, however, seemed pleased that she spoke to him. He questioned her very minutely as to what time and in what place she had met the man, and he wanted to know all about his dress and appearance.

But when they reached the colony Gertrud at once left Ingmar. She felt very downcast and terribly tired. ' I can see that our Lord does not want me to speak about this to other people. Oh, how happy I was when I was the only one who knew about it !'

She made up her mind that she would not speak about it to anyone else. She would also ask Ingmar not to mention it. ' But it is true, it is true,' she kept repeating to herself, ' that I met Him whom I saw in the forest. But it is perhaps too much to expect others to believe me.'

A day or two after this Gertrud was very much surprised at Ingmar coming up to her after supper, and telling her that he, too, had seen the man in the black robe.



'Ever since you told me that you had seen him, I have been on the watch for him, and have been walking up and down the same street,' said Ingmar.

'Then, you did believe me, Ingmar?' said Gertrud gladly. The fulness of her belief again awoke within her.

'You know I have always been slow to believe in things,' said Ingmar.

'Have you ever seen a face like His?' asked Gertrud.

'No,' Ingmar answered, 'I have never seen a face like that.'

'Don't you see it before you wherever you are?'

'Yes, I must confess I do.'

'Then don't you think it was Christ?'

Ingmar evaded giving her a direct answer. 'It will be for him to show us who he is.'

'If I could only see Him once again!' said Gertrud.

Ingmar stood a moment hesitatingly. 'I know where you could see him to-night,' he said a little uncertainly.

Gertrud was at once all eagerness. 'What do you say, Ingmar—do you know were He is? Then, you can take me there, and I can see Him once again.'

'But it is a dark night,' said Ingmar. 'I don't think it would be advisable to go into the city at this hour.'

'Oh, that does not matter,' said Gertrud; 'I have been there much later than this when I went to visit the sick.' Gertrud had hard work to persuade Ingmar. 'Do you think I am not in my right senses? Is that why you won't take me?' she said, and her eyes grew dark and strange.

'I am afraid it was foolish of me to tell you that I had found him,' said Ingmar, 'but now I believe that I had better go with you.'

Gertrud was so glad that the tears came into her eyes. 'But we must try to get away from the colony without anyone seeing us,' she said. 'I will not tell anyone here about it before I have seen Him once again.'

She managed to find a lantern, and at last they were on their way. It was a wet and stormy night, but Gertrud took no heed of it. 'Are you sure that I shall see Him to-night?' she asked time after time. 'Are you quite sure that I shall be able to see Him?'

Gertrud talked incessantly. To-night it seemed just like old times with Ingmar. She confided in him completely, just as in former days. She told him about all the mornings she had stood watching on the Mount of Olives. She told him how painful

it had been to her when people sometimes came, and stood and looked at her whilst she was kneeling and looking up to heaven. 'You can understand how unpleasant it was for me, when people looked so strangely at me, as if they thought I was out of my mind. But I was so sure that Christ would come that I could not help going up the mountain to watch for Him. I would rather He had come in great honour and glory—on the clouds of the morning,' she said; 'but what does that matter, if only He has come? What does it matter if He comes in the dark winter night? light is sure to come when He appears. And to think, Ingmar, that you should have come here just at the time when He has again appeared! You ought to be thankful you have not had to wait. You have come just in the fulness of time.'

Gertrud suddenly stopped; she held up the lantern so that she could see Ingmar's face. He looked dark and stern. 'How old you have grown during this year, Ingmar!' she said. 'I suppose you have been grieving for my sake. But you must not think any longer about having given me sorrow. It was the will of God that things went as they did. It was God's great mercy towards you and me. He wanted to lead us to Palestine for the great appointed time. Father and mother will also be glad when they see the providence of God,' Gertrud continued. 'Not that they have ever written an unkind word to me because I left them—they knew that it was more than I could bear to stay at home; but I know they felt very bitter against you. But now they will be reconciled with both the children who grew up in their home. Do you know, Ingmar, I almost believe they have grieved more over you than over me.'

Ingmar walked silently by her side in all the drizzling rain; he made no more answer to her last remark than he had done to the previous one. 'He evidently does not believe that I have found Christ,' she thought; 'but what does that matter as long as he takes me to Him. Oh, if I can only have patience a little while longer, I know that I shall see all the people and Princes of the earth bow the knee before Him who is the Saviour.'

Ingmar took Gertrud to the Mohammedan quarter of the city, and they passed through many narrow and crooked streets. At last he stopped outside a low gate, in a high wall without any windows, and pushed it open. They went down a long passage and came into a lighted courtyard.

Some servants were busy in a corner of the courtyard, and two old men were sitting on a stone seat alongside the one wall, with their legs drawn up under them; but no one noticed Ingmar and

Gertrud come in. They sat down on another seat, and Gertrud began to look about her. The courtyard was like many others she had seen in Jerusalem. On all four sides there was a covered colonnade, and over the open space in the centre was stretched a large dirty awning which hung in tatters.

It looked as if it had once been a handsome and imposing house, although it was now neglected and dilapidated. The pillars looked as if they might have been taken from a church. They had evidently once upon a time been richly decorated, but now all the ornamentation had disappeared. The whitewash on the walls was sadly in want of repair, and dirty rags had been stuffed into the holes in the walls. Against the one wall was piled a quantity of old boxes and hen-coops.

Gertrud whispered to Ingmar: 'Are you sure it is here I shall see Him?'

Ingmar nodded assentingly. He pointed to twenty small lamb-skin rugs lying in a circle in the centre of the courtyard. 'There I saw him yesterday with his disciples,' he said.

Gertrud looked a little disappointed, but she soon smiled again. 'Is it not strange that it is always like this?' she said. 'One expects Him to come in honour and glory, but He will not have it so; He comes in lowliness and poverty. But you know well enough that I am not like the Jews, who would not accept Him because He did not appear as the Prince and Ruler of this world.'

Soon afterwards some men came in from the street. They walked slowly to the middle of the courtyard and sat down on the small skin rugs. All those who came into the courtyard were dressed in Eastern garments, but otherwise they differed greatly. Some were young and some old; some were attired in costly furs and silk; others looked like poor water-carriers and labourers. As they came in, Gertrud began to make up stories about them and give them names.

'Look! there is Nicodemus, who came to Jesus by night,' she said, pointing to a distinguished-looking old man, 'and the man with the long beard is Peter, and there sits Joseph of Arimathea. I have never been able to realize before how it was when the disciples of Jesus gathered round Him. That is John who is sitting there with downcast eyes, and the man with the red hair and the felt cap is Judas. But the two who are sitting on the stone seat, with their legs crossed, and smoking their water-pipes, and pretending not to take the slightest interest in what they are going to hear, are two of the scribes. They do not believe in Him. They have only come from curiosity or to contradict Him.'

Whilst Gertrud was talking in this way, all the places in the circle were taken up. Then the man whom she was expecting came in, and took up a position in the centre.

Gertrud had not noticed from whence he came. She nearly screamed when she suddenly saw him. 'Yes, yes, it is He!' she cried, folding her hands. She gazed at him as he stood there in prayer, with downcast eyes, and the longer she looked at him the stronger grew her belief. 'Surely you can see that He is not an ordinary man, Ingmar?' she whispered.

And Ingmar answered, likewise in a whisper: 'When I first saw him yesterday, I, too, believed that he was more than a man.'

'It is blessed only to look upon Him,' said Gertrud. 'There is nothing that He could ask me that I would not do for Him.'

'I suppose it is because we are accustomed to picture the Saviour to ourselves like this,' said Ingmar.

This man, whom Gertrud supposed to be the Christ, now stood with dignified and authoritative bearing in the midst of his disciples. He moved his hand slightly, and all those who were sitting on the ground around him cried with loud voices, 'Allah! Allah!' And at the same time they began to move their heads, with a jerk, first to the right, then to the left—then to the right, then to the left. They all moved in time, with each jerk crying, 'Allah! Allah!' The man in the middle stood almost motionless, only indicating the time by a slight movement of the head.

'What is this?' said Gertrud, 'What can it be?'

'You have been longer in Jerusalem than I have, Gertrud,' said Ingmar. 'You should know better than I.'

'I have heard of some people who are called the dancing dervishes,' said Gertrud; 'this must be their service, I think.' She sat quite still for a little while. Then she said: 'You may be sure this is only the beginning. Perhaps it is the custom in this country, just in the same way as we begin our service with a hymn. When this is over, He will no doubt begin to expound His teaching. Oh, how I long to hear His voice!'

The men who were sitting around him continued to cry, 'Allah! Allah!' whilst they jerked their heads first to the one side and then to the other. They moved quicker and quicker. The perspiration stood on their foreheads, and the cries of 'Allah!' grew more and more hoarse. They continued doing this uninterruptedly for several minutes, until their leader made a little movement with his hand, when they immediately stopped.

Gertrud sat looking down, so as not to see how they tormented themselves. When there was silence, she looked up and said to

Ingmar: 'Now He will begin to speak. How happy those must be who can understand His preaching! But I shall be satisfied with only hearing His voice.'

There was complete silence for a few moments; but soon the leader gave a sign, and his followers again began to shout 'Allah! Allah!' This time he gave them a sign not only to move their heads, but the upper part of their bodies. This man, with the powerful face and the beautiful Christ-like eyes, thought only of urging on his followers to more and more violent exertion. He allowed them to go on minute after minute. As though supported by some supernatural strength, they kept it up much longer than one would have thought human nature capable of. It was most uncanny to watch these men, who looked half dead with their exertions, and to hear the moaning cries that came from their parched throats.

After they had done this for some time there was a pause. Then they again began these frantic movements, and then there was another pause.

'These fellows must have had a lot of practice,' said Ingmar, 'before they learnt to keep it up like this.'

Gertrud looked up at Ingmar with a helpless and anxious glance. Her lips trembled a little. 'Do you think He will never stop this?' she asked. Then she looked at the imposing figure that stood so commandingly in the midst of his followers, and was filled with new hope. 'You will see that the sick and unhappy will soon come to Him for help,' she said feelingly. 'We shall see Him heal the lepers, and restore sight to the blind.'

But the dervish went on as he had begun. He made a sign that they should all stand up, and then their movements grew still wilder and more violent. They all remained in their places, but their poor bodies moved and swayed with the utmost violence. Their eyes stared straight before them, dim and bloodshot. Several of the men did not seem to know where they were. Their bodies moved, as if mechanically, to and fro, up and down, faster and faster.

At last, when they had been sitting there a couple of hours, Gertrud, in her anguish, seized hold of Ingmar's arm. 'Has he nothing else to teach them?' she whispered.

For it now began to dawn upon her that the man whom she had thought to be Christ had nothing else to teach save these wild practices. He had no thought for anything but exciting and egging on these poor mad creatures. When one of them moved faster and more incessantly than the rest of them, he placed him

inside the circle, and let him moan and writhe as an example to the others. He himself became more excited. His body, too, began to sway and writhe, as if unable to keep quiet.

Gertrud sat struggling with her tears and her despair. All her dreams and hopes were shattered, and died within her. 'Has he nothing—nothing else to teach them?' she asked once more.

As if in answer, the dervish gave a sign to some servants that had taken no part in their worship. They seized some instruments hanging on one of the pillars, some drums and tambourines. As soon as they heard the music, the shouts grew wilder and more shrill, and the men's writhings more and more violent. Several of them tore off their turbans and loosened their hair that was two or three feet long. They looked terrible as they swayed to and fro, their long hair the one moment being flung across their faces, and the next moment whirled back over their heads. Their eyes grew more and more fixed, their faces more and more like dead men's faces; their movements became like those of a man in a fit, while froth issued from their mouths.

Gertrud stood up. All her joy and ecstasy were dead, and now her last hope was gone. There was nothing left but a feeling of profound loathing. She walked towards the gate, without casting a glance at him whom she but a little while ago had believed to be the Saviour of the world.

'One must feel truly sorry for this land,' said Ingmar, when they were once again in the street. 'Think what teachers they had in olden days—and this man's teaching only consists in making his followers wriggle and writhe like lunatics.'

Gertrud did not answer; she walked quickly homewards. When they were outside the colony, she lifted her lantern. 'Did you see him like this yesterday?' she asked, looking into Ingmar's face with eyes that gleamed with anger.

'Yes,' Ingmar answered, without hesitating.

'Could you not bear to see me happy, since you felt you must show him to me?' said Gertrud. 'I will never forgive you for this,' she added in a little while.

'I can quite understand that you feel like that,' said Ingmar; 'but one must do what is right, all the same.'

They went quietly into the house by the entrance at the back. Gertrud left Ingmar with an angry laugh. 'Now you can sleep peacefully,' she said. 'You have done your business well. I do not any longer believe that fellow to be Christ; I am no longer out of my senses. You have done very well.' Ingmar went quietly towards the staircase leading to the men's quarters.

Gertrud followed him. 'Remember what I have said, that I shall never forgive you for this,' she repeated.

Then she went to her own room, went to bed, and cried herself to sleep. She awoke early the next morning, but did not get up. She lay and wondered to herself: 'What is the matter? Why don't I get up? How can it be that I don't long for the Mount of Olives.'

She covered her face with her hands and cried again. 'I do not expect Him any longer. I have no longer any hope. It hurt too much yesterday when I saw that I had made a mistake. I dare not expect Him. I do not think He will come.'

For nearly a whole week Gertrud did not go near the Mount of Olives. But then the old longing and belief again awoke within her. One morning she again wended her way there, and everything was as before.

One evening when the colonists were assembled as usual in the large room, Ingmar saw Gertrud go and sit down by Bo and talk to him long and eagerly.

Shortly afterward Bo got up and came across to Ingmar. 'Gertrud has been telling me what you tried to do for her the other night,' said Bo.

'Has she?' said Ingmar; he did not know what the other was driving at.

'I know quite well that you did it to save her from going out of her mind,' said Bo.

'Surely it is not so bad as all that?' said Ingmar.

'Yes,' said Bo; 'one who has been suffering the same sorrow for more than a year knows how bad it is.'

He turned away to go; then Ingmar suddenly put out his hand.

'Let me tell you,' he said, 'there is no one here I would rather be friends with than you.'

A smile passed over Bo's face, 'I don't think it will be very long before we are unfriendly again,' he said. But all the same he grasped Ingmar's hand.

## CHAPTER III

### IN THE DAYS OF POVERTY

WHEN Ingmar Ingmarsson had been two or three months in Jerusalem, he one day went down to the Gate of Joppa. It was an unusually fine day, there were many people about, and Ingmar was amused by watching the heterogeneous crowd passing in and out through the gateway.

But he had not stood there long before he quite forgot where he really was. His thoughts soon began to busy themselves with a matter which occupied his mind continually. 'If I only knew how I should manage to get Gertrud away from the colony!' he thought, 'but it seems quite impossible.'

It had by degrees become quite clear to Ingmar that he could not let Gertrud remain in Jerusalem, and that he must make her go back with him, if he wished ever to regain his peace of mind. 'If I only had her back again in the old school-house!' he thought, 'if I only had her well out of this dreadful land, where there are so many heartless people, and so many dangerous illnesses, and so many peculiar ideas and fancies! To get Gertrud back again to Dalarne is really the only thing I have to think about now. Whether I am fond of her, or she is fond of me, is a matter I must not trouble about; all I must think about is to bring her back to her old parents.'

'Things don't seem to be quite as flourishing in the colony now as when I came,' thought Ingmar. 'There are hard times in store for it; that alone is sufficient reason for getting Gertrud away. I can't understand how it is that the colonists have all at once become so poor; it looks as if they had not any money at all. There is not one of them who ventures to buy himself new clothes, not one who thinks he can afford to buy an orange at a fruit-stall, and I almost think it looks as if they were afraid of satisfying their appetites at meal-times.'

Ingmar had of late fancied that Gertrud was beginning to care



or Bo, and he thought that perhaps she might marry him if they were only safely back in Sweden again. This, Ingmar thought, would be the greatest happiness that he could now hope for. 'I know I shall never get Barbro back again,' he said to himself, but I would be satisfied if I could only get out of marrying anybody else; I could very well manage to go through life alone.' But he always hurriedly put these thoughts away from him, and took himself severely to task. 'You shall neither think this thing nor that; you must not get any silly notions into your head; the only thing you have to do is to try and think how you can get Gertrud home again.'

Whilst Ingmar stood thinking about this, he saw one of the members of the Gordon colony coming out of the American Consulate, which was near the Gate of Joppa, together with the Consul. 'That is rather strange,' Ingmar thought. He had now been there long enough to know that the Consul always tried to do the colony all the harm he could. There was always much hostility between him and all those belonging to the colony. The man who was talking to the Consul was an American, Clifford by name. When they got into the street, the Consul shook hands with him and said good-bye. They seemed to be on the best of terms.

'You are quite sure, then, that you dare run the risk of doing it to-morrow?' said the Consul.

'Yes,' said the man, 'I must try and get the matter settled whilst Mrs. Gordon is away.'

'Don't be afraid,' said the Consul; 'whatever happens, I will take care that you get off scot-free.'

At that moment the Consul saw Ingmar. 'Isn't he one of them?' he asked in a low voice. Clifford looked round alarmed, but was reassured when he saw it was Ingmar. 'Oh yes; that's the fellow who goes about all day looking as if he were asleep,' he said, not even taking the trouble to lower his voice. 'He has only recently come here, and I don't think he understands English.'

This seemed to reassure the Consul, and when he parted from Clifford he said: 'To-morrow, then, we shall be rid of the whole gang.'

'I hope so,' Clifford replied, looking a little less confident. He stood for a short time and watched the Consul as he walked away. Ingmar thought the man looked nervous and pale. The conversation Ingmar had just heard set him thinking, and he felt very uneasy.

'I am sorry to say he was quite right when he said that I did not understand English very well,' Ingmar thought; 'but that much I do understand, that he means to play us a nasty trick at the colony, and that he means to do it whilst Mrs. Gordon is staying at Joppa. I wonder what he is up to. The Consul looked as pleased as if the colony were already done for.'

'As far as I can make out, this Clifford has been dissatisfied with the arrangements at the colony,' Ingmar went on thinking. 'I was told that to begin with he was one of the most eager of the colonists, but that lately he had cooled down considerably. Who knows?—perhaps he has fallen in love with one of the sisters, and thinks this is the only manner in which he can get her away from the colony; and then he thinks, perhaps, that the colony cannot hold out much longer, on account of their poverty, and that it may just as well be broken up now as later on. Yes, when I think it all over, I expect that it is poverty which has discouraged him. I believe he has been trying for some time to make the others discontented. Once I heard him making remarks upon Miss Young being better dressed than the other sisters, and another time he declared that they had better food at Mrs. Gordon's table than at the others. The Lord preserve us!' thought Ingmar, stepping on to the road. 'I am sure that Clifford is a dangerous fellow. I had better hurry home and tell them what I have heard.'

But the next moment he went back to where he had been standing near the gate. 'No, Ingmar, you ought to be the last person to tell the colonists what is hanging over their heads. You let the man do as he likes—it will make matters all the easier for you. You have just been wondering how you could manage to get Gertrud away from the colony; now it will all right itself. It is evident that both the Consul and Clifford are sure that there will soon be no more Gordonites left in Jerusalem. I only wish the colony would be disbanded,' thought Ingmar. 'Then I am sure Gertrud would be only too glad to go back with me to Sweden.'

When the thought occurred to Ingmar that there might soon be a possibility of his going home, he felt how strong was his longing. 'When I think that at this time of the year I should, by rights, be busy cutting down timber in the old forest, my fingers simply itch to get hold of an axe. I really can't understand how the Swedes here have been able to stand it so long, without any work either in field or forest. And I am pretty sure that if a man like Tims Halvor had only had his charcoal-burning

to look after, or a field or two to plough, he would still have been in the land of the living.'

Ingmar could hardly stand still for eagerness and longing. He went through the gateway, and down the road leading across the Valley of Hinnom. Time after time, and more and more positively, the thought came to him that, if they could but get back to Sweden, Gertrud would marry Bo, and he—Ingmar—would be allowed to live alone in peace. Who knows?—perhaps Karin might come and live with him at Ingmars' Farm, and keep house for him. That would be the most natural arrangement, and then her son could have the farm after him.

'Even if Barbro should go back to her father's parish, it is not so far away but that I could see her now and again,' he thought, continuing to make plans for the future. 'I could go to her church every Sunday if I liked, and now and then, I dare say, we should meet at a wedding or a funeral, and at the meal, I suppose, I could arrange to sit next to her and talk to her. We need not be enemies because we are divorced.'

Once the thought struck Ingmar whether it was not a little mean of him to rejoice at the prospect of the possibility of the colony being broken up, but immediately he began eagerly to defend himself. 'No one can live as long as I have done amongst these colonists without seeing what excellent people they really are; but, all the same, one could not wish that things should continue as they now are. How many of them have not already died, and how much persecution have they not had to endure! And now all this poverty has come upon them! I can't help thinking that, now poverty has been added to their other trials, one ought to wish that the colony might be disbanded as soon as possible.'

Whilst Ingmar was turning all this over in his mind, he had been walking towards home. He had passed the Valley of Hinnom, and was walking along the road leading up to the Mountain of Evil Counsel, where new palatial buildings stood side by side with ancient ruins. Ingmar had gone some distance without thinking of where he was going; sometimes he stopped, and then went on again, as one does when much engrossed in thought.

At last he stood still under a tree. He had been standing there some time before he noticed anything peculiar about the tree. It was rather high, and in one respect it differed from all the other trees, in having branches only on the one side of the stem. Not one of its branches grew upwards, but they were all

twisted together, forming a compact mass of branches, closely intertwined, and pointing straight towards the east.

When Ingmar saw what tree it was he started. 'It is Judas's tree; it was here the betrayer hanged himself. How strange! how ever have I got here?'

He remained standing where he was, looking up at the tree. 'I wonder whether our Lord has brought me here because He thinks I am a traitor to the colonists?'

He remained standing some moments in silence. 'What if it should be God's will that this colony should remain here and thrive?'

Ingmar's thoughts worked heavily and slowly. And the thoughts that came were painful and bitter. 'You may reason with yourself as you like, but you are doing a great wrong if you do not warn the colonists, when you know there is a conspiracy against them. It looks as if you thought that our Lord did not know what He was doing when He brought your nearest and dearest to this strange land. But even if you cannot see His reason for doing so, you can surely understand that He did not mean that it should only last for a year or two. Perhaps God had looked down upon Jerusalem, and seen all the strife and discord that filled the city, and thought: 'Behold, even here will I create Me a sanctuary where unity dwells, and a house of peace and concord will I build here.'

Ingmar remained standing under the tree, conflicting thoughts battling within him. They stood opposing each other like warriors fighting valiantly. The hope that had sprung up within him, that he might soon be able to go home, had taken deep root. He fought long to be allowed to keep it. The sun went down, and darkness followed in its wake, but Ingmar remained standing, struggling with himself.

At last he folded his hands in fervent prayer: 'I pray Thee now, O God, that Thou wilt help me to walk in Thy ways.'

He had hardly uttered these words before he felt a wonderful peace in his heart. And at the same time he felt that his own will was entirely subdued, and that he now began to act according to a will not his own, but another's. He felt it as distinctly as if someone had taken him by the hand and was leading him. 'It is God who is leading me,' he thought.

He went down the Mountain of Evil Counsel, across the Valley of Hinnom, and past Jerusalem. He meant the whole time to go to the colony and tell the leading men what he had discovered. But when he came to the place where the road to Joppa branches

off, he heard the tramp of horses behind him. He turned round. It was a dragoman whom he had seen at the colony several times, and who now came galloping up with two horses. He was riding the one, and leading the other by the bridle.

'Where are you going?' shouted Ingmar, trying to stop him as he galloped past.

'I am on my way to Joppa,' answered the man.

'So am I,' said Ingmar. It struck him that moment that he ought to make use of this opportunity and go straight to Mrs. Gordon, rather than go first to the colony.

It was soon arranged that Ingmar should borrow the other horse as far as Joppa. It was a fine horse, and Ingmar congratulated himself upon this good idea. 'I can surely manage the thirty miles to Joppa to-night,' he thought, 'and then Mrs. Gordon can be back at the colony to-morrow afternoon. But when Ingmar had ridden about an hour he noticed that his horse had gone lame. He dismounted, and found that it had lost a shoe. 'What shall we do now?' he said to the dragoman who was riding by his side.

'There is nothing else for it,' replied the man, 'but my going back to Jerusalem and getting it shod.'

Here was Ingmar standing in the middle of the road, without the least idea as to what he should do. But suddenly he made up his mind to walk the rest of the way to Joppa. He did not know if it were the wisest thing he could do, but the power that seemed to be over him drove him onwards. He was much too eager to turn back.

Ingmar set off to walk, covering the ground quickly with his long strides. When he had been walking some time, he began, however, to feel a little uneasy. 'How in the world shall I be able to find out whereabouts in Joppa Mrs. Gordon is staying?' he thought. 'It was quite another thing as long as I had the dragoman with me. I shall have to walk about from house to house to inquire for her.' But in spite of his feeling how awkward it was, he resolutely continued his journey.

He was walking along a good and broad highway. Even if the night had been dark, there would have been no difficulty in finding his way. But shortly after eight o'clock the moon appeared, and the hills between which the road wound its way became visible on all sides.

The road climbed up and down all these hills; as soon as Ingmar had disposed of one, a new one appeared. He often felt

extremely tired, but the power under whose influence he was urged him onward. He gave himself no time to stop and rest.

It seemed to Ingmar that he must have been walking along this road for hours. How long he had been walking he did not know but he was still amongst the hills. As soon as he reached the top of a hill, he thought that surely he must now have got far enough to enable him to see the Plain of Sharon and the sea expanding beyond it. But he saw nothing but hill after hill before him. Ingmar took out his watch; the moonlight was so clear that he could easily see the hands and figures on his watch. It was soon eleven o'clock. 'My God! is it so late as that?' he thought, 'and I am still walking amongst Judæa's mountains!'

He grew more and more concerned and uneasy. He now no longer walked, but set off to run. He panted for breath, the blood worked in his temples, and his heart beat violently. 'I shall not be able to stand this much longer,' he thought, but all the same he continued running.

He ran down a long slope at full speed. The road lay before him in the moonlight, straight and level, and he never thought of any danger. But at the bottom of the valley he suddenly came into a dark shadow. There he could not see the road so distinctly, but he did not slacken his speed. He stumbled over a stone and fell to the ground.

He was soon up again, but he felt that he had hurt his knee, and that he could only walk with difficulty. He sat down by the roadside. 'It will soon be all right,' he thought, 'but in the meantime I shall have to rest a little. He felt, however, that it was nearly impossible for him to sit still. He hardly gave himself time to regain his breath. 'I can feel I am not my own master,' he said. 'I feel just as if someone were pulling and dragging me in the direction of Joppa.'

He got up again. His knee hurt him badly; he did not take any notice of it, but walked on. Soon, however, his legs refused to carry him any further, and he remained lying on the road. 'I cannot walk any more,' he said to the power which urged him on. 'In God's name find something to help me.'

As Ingmar said this he heard the noise of wheels in the distance. The noise approached with incredible rapidity. Almost the same moment that he heard it in the far distance it was quite close upon him. He could hear the horse coming down the hillside in the wildest gallop. Through the noise of the wheels and the hoofs he could hear the incessant cracking of a whip, and the cries with which the driver urged on his horse.

Ingmar had to exert himself to the utmost to crawl to the side of the road in order to get out of the driver's way.

The man came tearing down the slope. Ingmar could distinctly see him. The vehicle was an ordinary plain green-painted cart, of the kind they use in West Dalarne. 'Ho-ho!' Ingmar at once thought, 'this does not quite tally, I should be very much surprised if there are any vehicles of this kind in Palestine.' The driver was even more strange, he thought. He, too, evidently came from the old country, and looked like a real Dalar man, with a little black hat and short hair, and, to complete the picture, he had taken off his coat, so that one saw his green waistcoat with the red sleeves. Those clothes hailed from Dalarne, and no mistake. The horse was also peculiar. It was a grand horse, big and strong, black in colour, and so sleek and well groomed that its coat shone. The man in his eagerness drove standing up, and was bending over the horse, cracking the whip to make it go faster. The horse did not appear to feel the blows, neither was it distressed at the terrible pace, but rushed down the road as if it were all play.

When the driver was alongside of Ingmar he pulled up with a jerk. 'I will give you a lift if you like,' he said. In spite of Ingmar's anxiety to get to Joppa, he did not much relish accepting the offer. Not only could he see that it was all witchcraft and devilry, but the fellow had a most hateful face, full of scars, as if he had been in many a fight. Over the one eye there was, to boot, a fresh cut from a knife. 'I no doubt drive more quickly than you are accustomed to,' said the man 'but I thought you were in a hurry.'

'Is your horse safe?' said Ingmar.

'He is blind, but he is safe enough.'

Ingmar shook from head to foot. The man bent down and looked him in the face. 'You come along with me; you will be all right,' he said. 'I suppose you can guess who sent me.'

When the man said that, Ingmar felt all his courage return. He got into the cart, and they drove off at a mad pace towards the Plain of Sharon.

\* \* \* \* \*

Mrs. Gordon had gone to Joppa to nurse a sick friend. Her friend was married to a missionary who had always been friendly to the colonists, and helped them in various ways.

On the night that Ingmar Ingmarsson was on his way to Joppa, Mrs. Gordon had been sitting up with her friend until after midnight, when someone else took her place. When she came out

of the sick-room, she saw how light and clear the night was, with that wonderful silvery-white moonlight one never sees except by the sea. She went on to the balcony, and from there she could see the large orange gardens, the old town towering on its steep rock, and the shimmering, boundless sea.

The house in which Mrs. Gordon was staying was not in Joppa itself, but in the German colony on a small hill outside the town. Just under her balcony was the broad highroad which goes through the colony. In the clear moonlight her eyes could follow the road a long distance between the surrounding houses and gardens.

Mrs. Gordon now saw a man coming up the road very slowly, and as if uncertain about his way. He was a tall man, and the moonlight made him appear taller than he was, so that to her he almost looked like a giant. Every time he passed a house he stopped and looked very inquiringly at it. Mrs. Gordon did not know how it was, but she had a feeling as if there were something weird and uncanny about the man, just as if he were a ghost going about looking for a house where he could appear, in order to frighten to death its luckless inmates.

At last the man came up to the house where Mrs. Gordon was staying. He seemed to examine it still more carefully than the others; he went quite round it, and she heard him knock on the shutters and try the door-handle. Mrs. Gordon was leaning over the balcony to see what would next happen, when the man looked up and discovered her.

'Mrs. Gordon,' he said in a soft and cautious voice, 'can I speak a few words with you?' As he spoke he bent his head back, and she saw that it was Ingmar Ingmarsson. 'Mrs. Gordon,' said Ingmar, 'first of all I must tell you that I have come here entirely on my own account. None of the brethren know anything about it.'

'Is there anything wrong at home?' asked Mrs. Gordon.

'No, not exactly,' said Ingmar; 'but, all the same, it would be better if you went back.'

'I shall come to-morrow,' said Mrs. Gordon.

Ingmar stood a little, hesitating. Then he said in his most subdued voice: 'It would be best if you came at once.'

Mrs. Gordon grew a little impatient. She thought what trouble it would make to disturb the whole house, and she also thought that it was hardly necessary for her to comply at once with this peasant's wishes. 'If I could only find out what is really the matter!' she thought, and began to question him as to whether



anyone was ill or whether they were in need of money. Instead of answering, Ingmar turned round and began to walk away.

'Are you going already?' asked Mrs. Gordon.

'I have delivered my message; you must do as you please,' said Ingmar, without turning round.

Mrs. Gordon began to fear that something serious must be the matter. She was not long in making up her mind. 'If you will wait a few minutes, you can go back with me,' she cried to Ingmar.

'No, thank you,' he answered, 'I have a better conveyance than I think you can offer me.'

Mrs. Gordon's host lent her a pair of fast horses. They went at a great rate across the Plain of Sharon, and then between the hills towards the mountains of Judæa. Just as day began to dawn she drove up the long slopes above Ab Gosch, the old brigands' nest. She was annoyed with herself for having been so easily persuaded to return. That peasant knew nothing about the real state of affairs. There was not much sense in acting upon his advice. She told herself over and over again that she really ought not to continue her journey, but go back to Joppa.

She had just crossed a long ridge of hills, and was now driving into a valley, when she saw a man sitting by the roadside. He sat with his head resting on his hand, and he looked as if he were asleep. As the carriage drove up he raised his head, however, and Mrs. Gordon saw that it was Ingmar Ingmarsson.

'How can he possibly have got so far already?' she thought. She told the driver to stop, and called to Ingmar.

When Ingmar heard her voice he was exceedingly glad. He at once got up and went to the carriage. 'Are you going back to the colony, Mrs. Gordon?' he asked.

'Yes,' she answered.

'I am very glad to hear it,' said Ingmar. 'I was on my way to Joppa to fetch you, but I fell and hurt my knee, and here I have been sitting the whole night.'

Mrs. Gordon looked at him, quite frightened. 'Were you not in Joppa in the night, Ingmar Ingmarsson?' she asked.

'No, Mrs. Gordon, only in my dreams. Whenever I dozed a little, I dreamt I was walking up and down the streets of Joppa looking for you.' Mrs. Gordon felt quite overcome. She could not say a word. Ingmar looked a little awkward when she did not answer. 'Do you think you have room for me in the carriage, Mrs. Gordon?' he said. 'I am afraid I can't walk.'

In a moment Mrs. Gordon was out of the carriage, helping him

up. But then she stopped in the middle of the road. 'This is extraordinary,' she said half aloud.

Ingmar was obliged to arouse her. 'I hope, Mrs. Gordon, you will not mind my telling you that I think you ought to go back as quickly as possible.' She got into the carriage, but sat quite silent, thinking. Ingmar felt he must again disturb her. 'I hope you will forgive me, but there is something I must tell you. You have not heard anything with reference to the man called Clifford?'

'No,' said Mrs. Gordon.

'I heard him yesterday talking to the American Consul. I am afraid he is up to something to-day, whilst you are away.'

'What do you say?' exclaimed Mrs. Gordon.

'He means, if he can, I think, to upset the whole colony.'

Mrs. Gordon had at last collected her thoughts. She turned round to Ingmar, and questioned him minutely as to what he had heard.

When he had told her everything, she sat for some time buried in thought. Suddenly she raised her head and looked at Ingmar. 'I am very glad, Ingmar Ingmarsson, that you have already the interests of the colony so much at heart,' she said.

Ingmar turned very red. He asked her how she knew that he was a friend to the colony.

'I know it because you were in Joppa in the night, and brought me word that I must return home,' she said.

Mrs. Gordon now told Ingmar of how she had seen him in the night, and what he had said to her. When she had told him all this, Ingmar said it was the most wonderful thing he had ever experienced.

'If I am not mistaken,' said Mrs. Gordon, 'we shall see still more wonderful things before night, for now I am sure that God will help us.' She was now quite calm and assured, and spoke to Ingmar as if no danger were threatening them. 'Now you can tell me, Ingmar Ingmarsson, if anything else has happened at the colony since I left.'

Ingmar hesitated. Then he began to excuse himself, and said that he could not speak the language properly.

'Oh, I can understand you quite well,' said Mrs. Gordon.

'On the whole, things have gone on as usual,' he said at last.

'Surely there must be something to tell me,' said Mrs. Gordon.

'You may, perhaps—— I don't know whether you have heard about Baram Pasha's mill?' said Ingmar.

'No; what about it?' said Mrs. Gordon. 'I did not even know Baram Pasha had a mill.'

'Yes,' Ingmar said. 'Soon after Baram Pasha had become Governor of Jerusalem, it occurred to him that it was hard for the people that they only had hand-mills for grinding their corn. He then built a steam-mill in one of the valleys near the town. But it is not surprising that you have never heard of this mill, for it has hardly ever been in use. Baram Pasha has never had proper skilled hands to look after it, so it has always been out of order. Well, a day or two ago a message came from Baram Pasha, asking if one of the Gordonites could not start the mill for him. So one or two of us went down and put it to rights.'

'That is good news,' said Mrs. Gordon. 'I am glad we could do Baram Pasha a service.'

'Baram Pasha was also so pleased that he proposed to the colonists that they should continue to look after the mill. He said that, for that matter, they might keep it without paying him any rent. "You can have all the profits from the mill," he said, "if you will only keep it going."

Mrs. Gordon turned quite round to Ingmar. 'Well,' she said, 'what did our people say to that?'

'It was not very difficult to answer that question,' said Ingmar. 'All they could say was that they would be glad to look after the mill for him, but that they could take no pay for their work.'

'That was quite right,' said Mrs. Gordon.

'I don't know whether it was quite right,' said Ingmar, 'for now Baram Pasha won't let them have the mill. He says he can't trust them with the mill if they won't take proper pay for their work. "It will never do," he said, "to accustom the people here to get things for nothing." He also said that all those who sell flour or have mills would complain about him to the Sultan.'

Mrs. Gordon was silent.

'So nothing came of that mill,' said Ingmar. 'If it had been arranged, the colonists could at least have made enough for their daily bread, and it would also have been a great blessing for the people to have had the mill going. But it is no use thinking about that.'

Mrs. Gordon made no reply to this, either. 'Has anything else happened?' she said, as if she wanted to make Ingmar talk about something else.

'Oh yes,' said Ingmar, 'there has been something about Miss Young and the school. Have you not heard anything about that?'

'No,' said Mrs. Gordon.

'Well,' said Ingmar: 'Achmed Effendi, who is at the head of all the Mohammedan schools in Jerusalem, came to the colony a few days ago, and said: "We have in Jerusalem a large school for girls, where several hundred children spend their time fighting and shrieking. These children make more noise than the Mediterranean does in the harbour of Joppa. Whether the teachers can read or write is more than I can say, but in any case they don't teach the children anything. And I cannot go myself, neither can I send another man to keep order there, for our religion forbids a man to put his foot inside a girls' school. There is only one thing I could think of," said Achmed Effendi, "that might help the school, and that is, if Miss Young would take over the management of it. I know that she is clever, and I know that she speaks Arabic. I shall be only too glad to give her whatever she asks for salary, if she will only undertake to manage the school."' '

'Well,' said Mrs. Gordon, 'how did it end?'

'Oh, just the same as with the mill,' said Ingmar. 'Miss Young said she was quite willing to undertake the school, but she would take nothing for her work. Then Achmed Effendi answered: "I am always accustomed to pay those who work for me. I am not in the habit of receiving favours." But Miss Young would not give way, and he had to leave without having accomplished his purpose. He was very angry, and told Miss Young that it would lie at her door that so many poor children would now grow up without being properly trained and taught.' '

Mrs. Gordon was silent for some time; then she said: 'I can see, Ingmar Ingmarsson, that you do not think we have done right in either of these cases. It is always advisable to hear a sensible man's opinion, and therefore I ask you to tell me what other objections you have to our mode of living.'

Ingmar sat for some time considering. There was so much dignity about Mrs. Gordon that it was not easy for him to criticise her work. At last Ingmar said: 'I do not see why it should be necessary to have so much poverty in the colony.'

'How do you think that could be avoided?' asked Mrs. Gordon with a smile.

Ingmar was even longer in answering this question than the former. 'If you would allow the members of the colony to accept payment for their work,' he said, 'then they would not get into such straits as they do now.'

Mrs. Gordon turned towards him hastily : ' I think that, when I have been able to manage this colony in such a way that for sixteen years they have lived in unity and love, a new-comer like you should not suggest alterations.'

' Now you are angry with me,' said Ingmar, ' and it was you yourself who asked me to speak.'

' I quite understand that you mean well,' said Mrs. Gordon. ' But I must tell you that we have still considerable capital left ; but lately someone has been sending false reports about us to our bankers in America, and therefore they have not sent us any remittances. But, from what I have heard, we may soon expect some money.'

' I am very pleased to hear it,' said Ingmar. ' But where I come from we hold that it is better for people to depend upon their own work, than upon other people's savings.'

To this Mrs. Gordon made no reply, and Ingmar felt that it would have been better to have kept quiet.

Mrs. Gordon got back to the colony in good time. It was only about half-past eight. For the last half-hour she had felt very uneasy as to how she would find matters on her arrival. As soon as she could see the big house, and that everything looked just as usual, she gave a sigh of relief. She felt as if she had almost expected that one of the powerful spirits, of which so much is related in Eastern tales, had bodily carried away the whole of the colony.

When they came nearer the house, they could hear that the colonists were singing a hymn. ' It seems as if everything were going on just as usual,' said Mrs. Gordon when the carriage pulled up outside the gate. ' I can hear they are at morning prayers.'

She had her own key to one of the doors at the back, and went in that way so as not to cause any disturbance. It hurt Ingmar very much to walk ; his knee had become quite stiff. Mrs. Gordon supported him with her arm, and helped him into the inner courtyard.

Ingmar at once sat down on a seat. ' Will you not go in, Mrs. Gordon, and see how matters stand ?' he said.

' Before I do anything else, I must put a compress on your knee,' she said. ' There is plenty of time ; you can hear they are still at morning prayers.'

' Will you not please do as I ask you this time ?' said Ingmar. ' Please go in at once and see if anything has happened.'

Ingmar sat watching Mrs. Gordon as she went up the steps and

across the open hall towards the meeting-room. As she opened the door, he could hear someone in the room speaking in a loud voice, and that the speaker suddenly stopped. Then the door was shut, and all was quiet.

Ingmar had not been waiting more than five minutes, when the door of the meeting-room was opened. Out of the room came four men, carrying a fifth between them; they walked silently down the steps and across the courtyard, passing close by Ingmar as they did so. He bent forward to see whom they were carrying. It was Clifford! 'Where are you taking him?' Ingmar asked.

The men stopped. 'We are carrying him down to the mortuary. He is dead.'

Ingmar stood up, horror-stricken. 'How did he die?' he asked.

'No human hand has touched him,' Ljung Björn answered.

'How did he die?' Ingmar asked again.

'I will tell you how it all happened,' said Ljung Björn. 'When morning prayers were ended, this man Clifford rose up to speak. He asked if he might be allowed to give us a message that he felt sure would please us. He had not time to say more before the door opened and Mrs. Gordon entered. As soon as he saw her he was silent, and became quite gray in the face. At first he stood quite still, but as Mrs. Gordon walked up the room and approached him, he drew back a little, hiding his face with his arm. We all thought it was so strange that we involuntarily stood up, and then it seemed as if Clifford tried to pull himself together. He clenched his hands, and drew his breath like one fighting against a deadly fear, and went to meet Mrs. Gordon. "How did you get here?" he said. Then Mrs. Gordon looked quietly and seriously at him, and said: "God has helped me." "I know it," he said, and his eyes were quite fixed with terror. "I see who is behind you." "I can also see who is behind you," Mrs. Gordon then said. "It is Satan." Then it seemed as if he could no longer bear to look at her; he drew further back, holding his arm before his face. Mrs. Gordon followed him, and stretched out her hand towards him, but she was not near enough to touch him with a finger. "I see that Satan is behind you," she repeated, and now her voice sounded loud and terrible. Then it seemed to us all as if we could see Satan standing behind him, and we stretched out our hands, and pointed to the one we saw, and we all shouted as one man: "Satan! Satan! Satan!" Then Clifford stole his way out from between us, and, although not one

of us moved, he groaned as if we were shooting at him or hitting him, and crouching like an animal he reached the door. But as he was about to open it, we all once again shouted, "Satan! Satan!" and then we saw him stumble and fall to the ground, and there he lay. When we went up to him he was dead.'

'He was a traitor,' said Ingmar; 'he received his just reward.'

'Yes,' said the others, 'he received his just reward.'

'But what had he meant to do to us?' said one.

'No one knows,' said another.

'I suppose he wanted to wreck the colony.'

'Yes—but how?'

'No one knows.'

'And I suppose no one ever will know.'

The colonists were in a state of great agitation all through the day; no one knew what Clifford's plans had been, or if the danger were averted by his death. Hour after hour was spent in prayer and the singing of hymns in the meeting-room. They felt as if they were removed, as it were, from this world by the thought that God had fought for them.

Now and then in the course of the day they saw large crowds, composed of the worst scum to be found in Jerusalem, gathered on the barren fields round the colony, watching the house. They presumed that Clifford had planned that this reckless mob should come and drive them away out of their home. But the crowd all went away again, and the day waned without anything having happened.

In the evening Mrs. Gordon went to see Ingmar Ingmarsson, who was sitting on his bed, with a compress on his knee. She thanked him warmly for his help, and was very kind and friendly. 'I want to tell you, Ingmar Ingmarsson,' she said, 'that if I can do you a service in return it will be a great pleasure to me. Will you confide in me, so that I can help you?'

Mrs. Gordon knew quite well why Ingmar had come to Jerusalem. At no other time would she have offered to help him in a matter of this kind, but now everything in the colony seemed to be more or less upset. To-day Mrs. Gordon felt that there was nothing she wished for so much as to see Ingmar happy, after he had done both her and the whole colony such a great service.

When Mrs. Gordon said this, Ingmar sat for some time meditating with closed eyes before he answered. 'Then, you must first promise me not to be angry at what I am going to ask you.'

Mrs. Gordon answered that she would not be angry at anything he might ask.

'It seems as if the matter about which I came over,' said Ingmar, 'is likely to take some considerable time, and it is very tedious for me to remain here without having any work of the kind to which I am accustomed.'

Mrs. Gordon said she could quite understand that.

'If you really will do me a service, Mrs. Gordon,' continued Ingmar, 'then I should feel greatly obliged if you could arrange that I took over Baram Pasha's mill. You must remember that I have not vowed not to make money as the others in the colony have, and that work would just suit me.'

Mrs. Gordon looked sharply at Ingmar, but he sat with his eyes almost quite closed and his face almost expressionless. She was astonished he had not asked for something else, but she was at the same time very pleased he had not.

'I do not see why I should not help you in that,' she said. 'There can't be any harm in that, and we ought to be pleased that we can oblige Baram Pasha.'

'I expected that you would help me,' said Ingmar. He thanked her, and they parted, much pleased with each other.



## CHAPTER IV

### INGMAR'S FIGHT

INGMAR now took over Baram Pasha's mill. He managed the mill himself, and first one and then another of the colonists came to help him.

But it is a well-known fact that about a mill there is always a good deal of witchery and that kind of thing, and the colonists soon found out that no one can sit for a while listening to the busy working of a mill without being bewitched.

The same thing happens to everyone who sits listening to the grinding noise of the millstones ; at last he understands what they hum and sing : We grind flour, we earn money, we are useful : but what do you do ? what do you do ? what do you do ?

And within the one who hears this there springs up an irresistible desire to earn his bread by the sweat of his brow. A downright fever seems to come upon him whilst he sits there listening to the mill. Unconsciously he begins to think over what he is fit for, what he can do, whether he cannot help the colony in some way.

When the colonists had been working a day or two in Baram Pasha's mill, they could talk of nothing but all the valleys in Palestine that were lying waste and useless, but which could very well be cultivated. They spoke about the mountain slopes that ought to be transformed into forests, and about the deserted vineyards that cried out for labourers.

And when the millstones had sung their lay two or three weeks, a day came when the Swedish peasants farmed a piece of land on the Plain of Sharon, and began to plough and sow. Shortly afterwards they rented two large vineyards on the Mount of Olives. And after a while they undertook the making of some large canals in one of the valleys.

When the Swedes had first shown the way, the Americans and Syrians little by little followed suit. They began to teach in the schools ; they bought a camera and wandered about the country

taking photographs, which they sold to the tourists ; they started a little goldsmith's workshop in a corner of the colony.

Miss Young had already for some time managed Achmed Effendi's school, and young Swedish girls taught young Moham-medan children sewing and knitting.

When harvest came there was a busy hum over the whole colony. It had become a complete ant-hill.

And when one came to think of it afterwards, it struck one that there had not been a single mishap the whole summer. Not one of the colonists had died since Ingmar had taken over the mill. Nor had anyone nearly lost his senses by fretting over the wicked maliciousness of Jerusalem.

Everybody was in the best of spirits ; they loved their colony more than ever, they made plans, they thought out new undertakings. This was all they had needed to become thoroughly happy. And now they were all convinced that it was the will of God that they had begun to earn their bread by their own labour.

In the autumn Ingmar left the management of the mill to Ljung Björn, and remained himself at the colony. He and Bo and Gabriel were busy building a kind of shed in the field just outside it. But no one knew what it was meant for, and no one was allowed to see how it was fitted up—it was a great secret.

When the shed at last was finished, Ingmar and Bo went down to Joppa, where they had some important negotiations with the German colonists who lived there.

Two days afterwards they were back again riding on two splendid chestnut horses. These were to be the colony's own horses, and so much is certain, that had a Sultan or an Emperor knocked at the gate, and stated his intention of joining the colonists, he would not have been more heartily welcomed.

Oh, how the children hung about the horses, and how proud the peasant was who was allowed to drive them before his plough ! They were better looked after than any other two horses in Eastern lands. And there was not a night that the brethren did not go out to see whether their mangers were well filled.

And the Swede, whoever it might be, who in the morning harnessed the horses could not help thinking : ' This is, after all, not such a very bad land to live in ; now I feel that I can thrive here all right. Oh, how hard it is that Tims Halvor did not live to see this ! He would never have died from grief had he had a pair of horses like these to drive.'

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Very early one September morning, when it was still dark, Bo and Ingmar left the colony, bound for one of the vineyards which they rented on the Mount of Olives. Bo and Ingmar were not on the best of terms. They never had been able to get on with each other. There was no open quarrel between them, but they were never of the same opinion about anything. This morning they began to dispute about which was the best way to the Mount of Olives.

Bo wished to go the long, roundabout way across the hills. He said it was the easiest road in the dark. Ingmar wanted to go by a shorter but more difficult road, which went through the Valley of Jehoshaphat, and then up the mountain by a steep ascent.

When they had been discussing this some time, Ingmar proposed that they should each go his own way, and then they could see who got there first. To this Bo was quite agreeable. He went the way he had suggested, and Ingmar went the other.

When Bo had left him, Ingmar felt the same great longing which always filled him when he was by himself. 'Will God never have pity upon me, and let me go back?' he said. 'Will He never help me to get Gertrud away from Jerusalem before she goes quite out of her mind? It is very strange that I seem to succeed least of all in the matter for which I came over here,' he said half aloud as he walked along in the dark, 'for I have not been able to make any impression upon Gertrud. But in other things I have fared much better than I could have expected. I don't believe the people here would ever have begun to work if I had not taken over the mill. It has been quite a pleasure to see how work has more and more taken hold of them,' he continued. 'I have seen much that is good here, and learnt much, but, all the same, I can't help longing for home. I always have a feeling of dread for this town, and I shall never be able to breathe freely until I get away from it. Now and then I have a feeling that I shall die here, and never go back, and never see Barbro and Ingmars' Farm again.'

Whilst Ingmar was thus thinking he had reached the bottom of the valley. High above him the battlements of the city wall stood out against the dark sky, and on all sides he was closed in by mighty hills.

'It is a horrid, uncanny road to be walking in the dark,' thought Ingmar. And it now occurred to him that he would have to pass both the Mohammedan and the Jewish burial-places.

Just as he thought of this he called to mind something he had heard the day before, but which at the time had made no more

impression upon him than many other things that were said about the Holy City. Now in the darkness, however, he thought it was a hideous story.

It was about a small hospital in the Jewish quarter, which was notorious all over the town on account of there never being any patients in it. Ingmar had passed it several times ; he had looked in at the windows, and had never seen anything but empty beds. The reason, however, was a very natural one. The hospital had been founded by an English missionary society for the purpose of receiving Jewish patients, in order to give the missionaries an opportunity of converting them ; but the Jews, being afraid that in a Christian hospital they might have to eat unclean food, would not allow themselves to be taken there.

But a day or two ago they had a patient at this hospital. It was a poor old Jewish woman, who had fallen and broken her leg in the street just outside the hospital. She had been carried into the hospital and nursed there, but had died two days afterwards.

Before she died she made the doctor and the English nurse solemnly promise that she should be buried in the Jewish cemetery in the Valley of Jehoshaphat. She told them that, old as she was, she had undertaken the journey to Jerusalem solely for this purpose, and if they could not promise her that, she said she would rather they had left her to die in the street.

When she was dead, the English sent word to the chairman of the Jewish community, requesting him to send some of their people to take away the corpse and bury it.

But then the Jews had answered that, as the old woman had died in a Christian hospital, she could not be buried in the Jewish cemetery.

The missionaries did all they could to persuade the Jews to give in. They had even approached the Chief Rabbi, but all in vain. Then there was nothing else left for them but to bury the old woman themselves. But they did not like that what had been the wish of the poor old woman through the whole of her life should not be gratified. They took no notice of the Jews' refusal, but had a grave dug in the cemetery in the Valley of Jehoshaphat, in which the old woman was buried.

The Jews did nothing to prevent the burial, but the following night they opened the grave and took out the coffin.

The English felt that they must keep their word to the old woman. As soon as they heard that she had been taken out of the grave, they came and buried her again in the same place. The next night the poor thing was dug up again.

Ingmar Ingmarsson suddenly stood still and listened. 'Who knows?' he thought—'perhaps these sacrilegious scoundrels have been at it again to-night.'

At first it seemed to him that everything was quiet, but then he heard a sharp noise, such as an iron implement would make against a stone. He hastily went a few steps in the direction of the noise; then he again stopped and listened. He could distinctly hear someone digging in the ground with an iron spade, and throwing up stones and gravel.

Again he went on a little, and again he heard someone digging. 'There must be several men at work,' he thought. 'Great God! how can anyone persecute a poor dead body in this way?'

Whilst Ingmar heard the noise of all this digging, a storm of indignation arose within him, which increased every moment. 'This is a matter which does not concern you,' he said to calm himself. 'You have nothing to do with it.' But the blood rose to his head, and he felt as if he could hardly breathe. 'It is shameful! it is atrocious! I have never heard anything like it,' he said to himself. At last he stopped. He raised his clenched fist and shook it. 'Wait a bit, you scoundrels, I am coming!' he said. 'I have had enough of this! No one can expect me to go quietly past whilst you dig up the dead.' He hurried forward with quick, noiseless steps. He felt almost light-hearted. 'I expect it is rather a mad thing I am doing,' he said to himself; 'but I wonder what my father would have done, if someone had shouted to him that he had better be careful and remain on dry land that day he went into the river to rescue the children? And now I must have my way in this matter, as my father had his. For a river of evil is flowing past me with black and troubled waters, and it carries away both living and dead; but now I can't stand looking quietly at it from the shore any longer. Now it is my turn to go out and fight against the stream.'

At last he stood by the side of a grave where several men were hard at work. They had no lantern, but had to dig as best they could in the dark. Ingmar could not see how many there were, and he did not ask, either, but rushed right in amongst them. He snatched a spade from one of them, and used it as a weapon right and left. He came so suddenly upon them that they were quite beside themselves from fear. They ran away without making even a semblance of resistance. A few moments later Ingmar stood there alone.

His first work was to fill up the grave again; then he began to consider what he should do next. He did not think it was

advisable to leave the grave before daylight, for he expected the men would come back as soon as his back was turned.

So he stood beside the grave, waiting. He strained his ears at every sound ; but to begin with there was no cause for alarm. 'I can hardly think they have run very far for the sake of one man,' he thought. Soon afterwards he heard suspicious sounds, and he fancied he could see dark shadows stealthily creeping towards him.

'Now I think they mean business,' thought Ingmar, raising his spade in defence. Suddenly a storm of stones, large and small, broke over him, almost stunning him. At the same moment several men set upon him, and tried to knock him down.

It was a hard tussle. Ingmar was a tremendously strong man, and he threw down his adversaries one after the other, but they would not give in. At last one of them fell right in front of Ingmar, just as the latter was moving forwards, and in consequence Ingmar stumbled over him. He fell heavily to the ground, and at the same moment felt a violent pain in one of his eyes. He almost lost consciousness, but had a vague sensation of the men throwing themselves upon him and binding him, without his being able to make the slightest resistance. The pain was so sharp and piercing, and his strength seemed so completely to leave him, that at first he thought he was going to die.

In the meantime Bo had been thinking about Ingmar ever since they parted company. To begin with he walked rather quickly, as he wanted to be the first at the vineyard, but before long he slackened his pace. He laughed rather dismally at himself. 'I know that, however much I hurry,' he thought, 'Ingmar will always reach the goal first. I have never seen anyone who has such luck in everything, and who always manages to get his own way. I fully expect it will end in him taking Gertrud back with him to Dalarne. One can't help noticing that for the last six months everything at the colony has gone just as he wishes.'

But when Bo arrived at the meeting-place on the Mount of Olives, he did not find Ingmar there, as he had expected, and he was very pleased. He at once began work, and continued at it for some time. 'For once he will find that he is in the wrong,' thought Bo.

It began to grow lighter, and, as Ingmar still did not come, Bo became uneasy, thinking something must have happened to him. Bo stopped work, and went down the mountain to look for him.

'The strange thing about it is,' Bo thought, 'that, although I have every reason not to like him, I think I should be very sorry if he came to any harm. He is a clever fellow, and has rendered great services to all of us. If Gertrud did not come between us, I think we should be great friends.'

It was soon broad daylight, and when Bo got down into the Valley of Jehoshaphat, he came upon Ingmar lying between two gravestones.

Ingmar's hands were bound, and he lay motionless, but when he heard Bo's heavy footsteps he raised his head a little. 'Is that you, Bo?' he said.

'Yes,' said Bo; 'what has happened to you?' When he looked at Ingmar's face, he saw that both his eyes were closed, and that the one was swollen, and that blood was flowing from it. 'Whatever have you been doing with yourself?' asked Bo, in a thick voice.

'I have been fighting those scoundrels,' Ingmar answered. 'I stumbled over one of them, and he had a knife in his hand, which I fancy must have cut me in the eye.'

Bo knelt down beside Ingmar and began to untie his hands. 'How was it you began to fight with them?' said Bo.

'I heard them digging as I came up the valley.'

'And you couldn't stand their digging the poor old woman up again?'

'No,' Ingmar said, 'I couldn't stand that.'

'It was very brave of you,' said Bo.

'Oh no! it was very stupid of me,' said Ingmar; 'but I could not help it.'

'I will tell you what,' said Bo: 'however stupid it may have been, I will be your friend as long as I live, on that account.'

## CHAPTER V

### ON THE MOUNT OF OLIVES

INGMAR was attended by one of the doctors from the big English ophthalmic hospital. The doctor came out to the colony every day to put on fresh bandages. Ingmar's eye quickly healed, and he was soon well enough to leave his bed.

But one morning the doctor noticed that the sound eye was red and swollen. He looked concerned, and at once gave orders as to its treatment. Then he turned to Ingmar, and told him straight out that the best thing for him to do was to leave Palestine as soon as possible. 'I am afraid your eyes are affected by the Egyptian eye disease,' he said. 'I will do the best I can for you, but your eyes, in their present weak state, are more susceptible to the infection, which is always in the air here. If you remain here, I am afraid you will be blind in the course of a few weeks.'

This news was the cause of much grief in the colony, not only to Ingmar's relatives, but to all the other colonists. Everyone said that Ingmar had done them the greatest possible service by persuading them to earn their bread by the sweat of their brow, like other people, and that a man such as he ought not to leave the colony. But, notwithstanding, they were all agreed that Ingmar must go back, and Mrs. Gordon said at once that one of the brethren must make ready to accompany him, as it would be impossible for him to travel alone.

Ingmar listened in silence to all this discussion about his going home. At last he said: 'I suppose it is not certain that I shall grow blind if I remain here?'

Mrs. Gordon asked what he meant.

'I have not yet finished the work for which I came over,' he said slowly.

'Do you mean to say that you will not go home?' asked Mrs. Gordon.



'Yes,' said Ingmar. 'I should be very sorry to go back without having accomplished my task.'

Mrs. Gordon now showed how highly she thought of Ingmar, for she went to look for Gertrud, and told her that Ingmar did not want to go home, although he ran the risk of being blind if he remained. 'I suppose you know for whose sake it is that he refuses to leave?' said Mrs. Gordon.

'Yes,' Gertrud answered.

Gertrud looked gravely at Mrs. Gordon, but did not say anything more. Mrs. Gordon could not in so many words ask her to break the laws of the colony, but Gertrud felt that whatever she did for Ingmar's sake would be forgiven her. 'If it were anybody else, Mrs. Gordon would not be so ready to give in,' she thought, feeling a little vexed. 'But they don't think that I am quite right; they would only be too pleased to get rid of me.' The whole of the next day, first one, then another, came and spoke to Gertrud about Ingmar. No one liked to tell her straight out that she ought to go back with him, but the Swedish peasants sat and talked to her about the hero who had fought for the dead in the Valley of Jehoshaphat, and they said that Ingmar had now shown that he was a true Ingmarsson. 'It would be a sad pity if such a man were to go blind,' they said.

'I saw Ingmar the day of the auction at Ingmars' Farm,' said Gabriel, 'and I tell you, had you seen him then, you could never have been angry with him.'

But Gertrud all that day had a feeling as if she were struggling against one of those dreams in which one wants to hurry away, but cannot move. She wanted to help Ingmar, but she did not know how to find the strength. 'How can I do this for Ingmar now that I no longer love him?' she asked herself. 'And how can I help doing it, when I know that he will be blind if I don't?' she again asked herself.

In the evening Gertrud was standing outside the colony under the great sycamore-tree, and she could think of nothing but that she ought to go with Ingmar, but that she had not strength enough to make up her mind. Then Bo came up to her.

'It happens sometimes,' said Bo, 'that one can be glad for one's misfortune, and sorrow over one's good fortune.'

Gertrud turned suddenly round and looked at him with frightened eyes. She did not say anything, but he could see that she thought: 'Have you also come to worry and torment me?'

Bo bit his lips, and his face quivered a little, but the next moment he managed, all the same, to say what was on his mind.

'When there is someone one has cared for the whole of one's life,' he said, 'one is afraid of losing her. And one is most of all afraid of losing her through her being so hard that she cannot forget and forgive.'

Bo spoke these hard words in a gentle voice, and Gertrud was not angry, but she began to weep. She remembered how she had once dreamt that she had pierced Ingmar's eyes. 'That dream appears to be coming true, and that I really am as hard-hearted and revengeful as I was in the dream,' she thought. 'Ingmar will become blind all because of me. She was filled with grief for Ingmar, but that feeling of helplessness that seemed to bind her would not be overcome, and night came and she lay down without having been able to make up her mind.

In the morning she got ready for her usual walk, and went across the hills to the Mount of Olives. The whole way she battled with this dull feeling of helplessness, but her will was paralyzed, unable to overcome this feeling. She called to mind having once seen a martin that had fallen to the ground and was lying struggling in the dust, and unable to get sufficient air under its wings to raise itself and fly away. It seemed to her as if she, too, were struggling and unable to stir.

But when she reached the Mount of Olives, and stood in the place where she was in the habit of watching the sun rise, she saw that the dervish whom she thought resembled Jesus was there before her. He sat on the ground with his legs crossed under him, and his eyes were resting upon Jerusalem.

Gertrud did not for a moment forget that the man was but a poor dervish, whose only claim to notoriety lay in the fact of his requiring his followers to dance more eagerly than did any other dervish. But when she saw his face with the dark shadows under his eyes, and the sorrowful expression of his mouth, she could not help trembling. She stood looking at him with folded hands. She was not dreaming, nor did she see visions; it was the great resemblance alone which made her feel as if she were gazing upon a Divine being.

She again felt convinced that, if he would only appear before mankind, it would be made manifest that he had fathomed the depths of all wisdom. She believed that storms and seas would obey his bidding; she believed that he spoke face to face with God; she believed that he had drained the cup of suffering; she believed that all his thoughts were of unseen things that were hidden to others. She felt that, if she had been sick, she would have been healed only by standing there and looking upon him.

‘He cannot be an ordinary mortal,’ she thought. ‘I feel that the bliss of heaven descends upon me simply because I behold him.’

She had stood by the side of the dervish for some time, without his apparently having noticed her, but suddenly he turned towards her. Gertrud trembled when he looked upon her; she felt as if she could hardly bear his glance. He gazed at her quietly and silently for a whole minute; then he stretched out his hand for her to kiss, as was the custom amongst his followers, and Gertrud kissed his hand in all humility. Then, with his usual gravity, he made a sign to her that she should go on her way and disturb him no more.

Gertrud obediently turned and left him, and went slowly down the mountain. It seemed to her that there was much significance in the way in which he had taken leave of her. It was as if he said: ‘Thou hast belonged to me for a time and served me, but now I release thee; henceforward live in the world for thy fellow-men.’

As she neared the colony, the spell that was over her little by little seemed to vanish. ‘I know that he is not the Christ; I do not believe that he is the Christ,’ she said again. But seeing him had wrought a great change in her. Simply because he had conjured forth the image of Christ before her, she felt as if every stone repeated to her the holy truths which He Himself had once taught in this land, and the flowers sang to her of the blessedness it was to walk in His footsteps.

When Gertrud returned to the colony she went in to see Ingmar. ‘I will go back with you, Ingmar,’ she said.

Ingmar drew a deep breath. A heavy load was evidently removed from his heart. He took Gertrud’s hands in his and pressed them. ‘God has been very good to me,’ he said.

## CHAPTER VI

### 'WE SHALL MEET AGAIN'

THERE was a strange bustle in the colony. The Dalar peasants were so busy that they had no time for the daily work in the fields or vineyards, and the Swedish children had got a holiday that they might remain at home and help the others.

It had been arranged that Ingmar and Gertrud should leave Jerusalem in two days' time. There was therefore no time to be lost in getting the things ready which the colonists wanted to send to friends at home.

There was now an opportunity of sending a little keepsake to former comrades and school-fellows, or to old friends of a lifetime. They could now show that they still had a kind thought for some one or other from whom they had been estranged during that trying time before they were called to Jerusalem, or for certain wise old people whose advice they had not relished at the time of their departure. They could now make parents or lover happy, and show the Pastor and the schoolmaster, who had educated them all, a little attention.

Ljung Björn and Kulas Gunnar sat the whole day with a pen in their stiff fingers, writing letters to relatives and friends, whilst Gabriel stood turning small cups of olive-wood, and Karin Ingmarsdotter sat tying up a quantity of large photographs of Gethsemane, of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, of the handsome house in which they lived, and of the big meeting-room, arranging them into different parcels.

The children were also busy; they were drawing pictures in Indian ink on thin pieces of olive wood, as they had been taught in the American school, or they made photograph-frames upon which they gummed specimens of all the different seeds and kernels and corn to be found in the East.

Märta Ingmarsdotter took a piece of diaper off the loom, and began to embroider initials on towels and serviettes which she was going to send to her sister and brother-in-law. And she

smiled to herself at the thought that those at home would see that she had not forgotten how to weave, and that her diaper was fine and even, although it was woven in Jerusalem.

Great Ingmar's two daughters who had been to America were busy filling jars with apricot and peach jam, and on the covers of the jars they wrote the dear names of friends of whom they could not think without the tears coming into their eyes.

But Israel Tomasson's wife stood rolling out gingerbread cakes, besides which she had to keep her eye upon a cake in the oven. The cake was meant for Ingmar and Gertrud to eat on the journey, but the gingerbread, which could be kept any length of time, they would not be allowed to touch. They should be divided between the old woman at Myckelsmyra, who had stood at the roadside so clean and tidy the day the pilgrims set out for Jerusalem, and Eva Gunnarsdotter, who once belonged to their community.

By degrees, as all the little parcels were ready, they were brought down to Gertrud, and she packed them in a large box. But if Gertrud had not lived in the parish from her childhood, she could never have undertaken to deliver all these different things to the right people, for some of the addresses were rather peculiar. She had to bethink herself before she could call to mind where to find 'Frans who lived at the crossways,' or 'Lisa who was a sister to Per Larsson,' and 'Erik who two years ago was in the service of the Chairman of the Parish Council.'

Ljung Björn's son Gunnar came with the largest parcel. It was addressed to 'Karin who sat next to me in school, and lived somewhere in the big forest.' The father's name he had forgotten, but for Karin he had made a pair of patent leather shoes with high heels. He knew well enough that it was the neatest piece of shoemaking ever done within the colony. And 'greet her from me, and ask her if she is not soon coming over here, as we agreed upon when I left home,' he said when he entrusted Gertrud with the parcel.

But the big farmers went to Ingmar, and gave him their letters and important messages. 'And then you must go to the Pastor, the Chairman of the Parish Council, and the schoolmaster,' they wound up with, 'and tell them that you have seen for yourself that we are well, and live in a proper house, and not in caves, and that we eat decent food, and that we work and lead a respectable life.'

\* \* \* \* \*

Ever since the day Bo had found Ingmar in the burial-place in the Valley of Jehoshaphat, the two had been great friends. And

whenever Bo had a spare hour he went to sit with Ingmar, who during his illness occupied one of the guest-chambers. But the day Gertrud had come back from the Mount of Olives, and had promised to go back with Ingmar, Bo did not visit the sick-room. Ingmar asked several times for him, but no one knew where Bo had gone.

As the day advanced Ingmar grew more and more uneasy. For the first few moments after Gertrud had promised to go back with him to Sweden, he had felt happy and contented. At first he only felt thankful at being allowed to take Gertrud away from this dangerous land, to which she would never have gone had he not wronged her. Of course he was still glad about this, but with every hour that passed the longing for his wife grew stronger and stronger. It seemed quite impossible that he could carry through what he had taken upon himself. There were moments when he felt he must tell Gertrud his whole story, but when he thought over it he had not the courage. As soon as she found out that he no longer loved her, she would probably refuse to go back with him. And he did not know who it was that Gertrud loved, whether it was himself or someone else. Sometimes he thought it was Bo, but lately he had been obliged to confess to himself that whilst Gertrud had been living in the colony she had assuredly loved but one—He whom she had awaited every morning on the Mount of Olives. But when she now went into the world again, it was possible that the old love for himself might again be awakened in her heart. And if this should happen, he thought it would be better to marry her and try to make her happy, instead of always going about longing for one who could never again become his.

But although he honestly battled with himself in this way, his misgivings only increased. As he sat there with his eyes bound up, he saw his wife constantly before him. 'There is no mistaking it; it is she to whom I belong,' he thought. 'No one else has any power over me. I know what it was that induced me to enter upon this undertaking,' he went on. 'It was because I wanted to be just as great as my father. Just in the same way as he brought my mother home from prison, I thought that I would bring Gertrud back from Jerusalem. But I understand now why I cannot succeed as my father did. I shall fail because I love another.'

In the evening Bo at last came to see Ingmar. He only came just inside the room, as if he intended to go away again directly. 'I heard that you had been asking for me,' he said.

'I have,' said Ingmar. 'You know, perhaps, that I am going back home.'

'Yes, I heard that it was settled,' said Bo shortly.

Ingmar had a bandage over both his eyes. He turned his head to the side where Bo stood, as if he would like to see him. 'You seem to be in a hurry,' he said.

'Yes, I have a good deal to do.' Bo made a step towards the door.

'There was something I wanted to ask you.'

Bo came back into the room, and Ingmar began again: 'I say, Bo, don't you think you would like to go home for a month or two? I am sure your mother would be very glad to see you.'

'I can't understand how you can think of such a thing,' said Bo.

'For if you would like to go back with us, I would pay your expenses,' Ingmar continued.

'Indeed!' said Bo.

'You see,' said Ingmar, growing more and more eager, 'your mother was my father's only sister, and I have been thinking that I should like to give her the happiness of seeing you once again before she dies.'

'It seems as if you would like to take the whole colony back with you,' Bo said rather scornfully.

Ingmar was completely silenced. It had been his last hope that he might persuade Bo to go back with him. 'I think Gertrud would soon grow fonder of him than of me, if he would only come with us,' he thought. 'He has always been faithful to her, and that he loves her so dearly must make an impression upon her.'

In a little while Ingmar again took heart. 'It was perhaps my own fault,' he thought; 'I did not put it to him in the right way.' 'Well,' he said aloud, 'I may as well confess that it is mostly for my own sake that I have asked you.' Bo made no answer. Ingmar sat waiting for it, but, as none came, he continued: 'I can't understand how Gertrud and I shall manage on this long, troublesome journey. If I am to go on having my eyes bandaged, I don't see how we shall manage to get in and out of the small ferry-boats that take us to the steamers. And it will be very difficult to get up the gangway, and that kind of thing. I am downright afraid of slipping and falling into the sea. It would be a great help to have a man with us on the journey.'

'I quite agree with you,' said Bo.

'And I should not think Gertrud will understand about buying tickets.'

'No ; I think you ought to have someone with you,' said Bo.

'I thought,' said Ingmar gladly, 'you would be able to see that it is quite necessary for us to have a companion.'

'I think you ought to ask Gabriel. His father would be very glad to have the chance of seeing him.'

Ingmar was again silent. He seemed very downcast when in a little while he said : 'I had got it into my head that you would come with us.'

'No, you must not ask me to do that,' said Bo. 'I am very happy here. You can get any of the others you want, I am sure.'

'But it makes all the difference whom I get ; you have been about so much more than the others.'

'I can't go, all the same,' said Bo.

Ingmar grew more and more uneasy. 'It is a great disappointment to me,' he said. 'I thought you were in earnest when you said you would be my friend.'

Bo hastily interrupted him. 'I am much obliged to you for the offer, but I don't think you can say anything that will make me change my mind, so now I would rather get back to my work.' With this he turned quickly round, without giving Ingmar time to say any more.

When Bo had got outside Ingmar's room, he did not seem to be so busy as he had tried to make Ingmar believe. He went quite slowly through the gateway, and sat down under the big old tree outside. It was getting late, and the daylight had vanished, but the stars and a narrow pointed new moon were shining brightly in the heavens.

Bo had not been sitting there five minutes before the gate was opened softly and Gertrud came out. She stood looking about for a few moments, but then she discovered Bo. 'Is it you, Bo?' she said, and she came and sat down by his side. 'I thought I should find you here.'

'We have sat here many an evening,' said Bo.

'We have, Bo,' said Gertrud ; 'but I suppose this is the last time.'

'I suppose it is.'

Bo sat straight and stiff. His voice sounded cold and hard. One would have thought that it was a matter of perfect indifference to him.

'Ingmar told me that he meant to ask you to come with us on the journey.'



'Yes, he spoke to me about it,' said Bo; 'but I told him I could not.'

'I did not think you would go with us,' said Gertrud.

They sat for some time in silence, as if there was nothing more to say, but Gertrud time after time turned her head and looked at Bo. He was sitting in the same attitude as before, staring at the sky.

After a long silence, Bo, without looking away from the sky or altering his position, said: 'Is it not too cold for you to be sitting here?'

'Perhaps you would rather I went in?' said Gertrud.

Bo moved his head as if he would say yes; he thought Gertrud could not see it in the dark. He said aloud: 'Oh, I don't mind your stopping here!'

'I came out to-night because I thought we might not have another opportunity of speaking together alone before I go away, and I wanted to thank you for all the care you have taken of me on my morning walks to the Mount of Olives.'

'I did that for my own sake,' said Bo.

'I would also like to thank you for that day when you fetched me the water from the Well of Paradise,' said Gertrud with a smile.

Bo seemed about to answer, but instead of words only something like a sob was to be heard.

Gertrud thought there was something strangely touching about Bo this evening, and she felt the greatest pity for him. 'It is hard for him that we shall never meet again,' she thought. 'He is a brave fellow not to complain, and I know that he has loved me all his life. I wish I knew what to say to comfort him. If I could only say something that he would like to remember when he sits here alone under the old tree in the evenings!'

Whilst Gertrud was thus thinking, her own heart seemed to contract with sorrow, and a strange feeling of stoniness came over her. 'I am afraid that I shall also miss Bo,' she thought; 'we have had so much to talk about of late. I have grown so accustomed to see his face beam with happiness every time we meet, and it was nice to know that there was one near me who was always satisfied with me, whatever I did.'

She sat silent for some time. The feeling of how she would miss him seemed to grow like an illness which has suddenly overtaken one. 'What is it? What can be the matter with me?' she thought. 'It surely can't be such a great sorrow for me to have to part from Bo!'

Suddenly Bo began to speak. 'There is one thing I have been thinking about, which I seem to have seen before me the whole evening,' he said.

'Do tell me what it is,' said Gertrud eagerly. She felt that her heart was relieved now that he spoke.

'Ingmar once told me,' said Bo, 'about a saw-mill he has close to Ingmars' Farm. I think he meant me to go back with him and rent it from him.'

'That shows how great Ingmar's friendship for you must be,' said Gertrud, 'for he sets greater store on that than on anything else he possesses.'

'And I have heard the saw-mill buzzing and whizzing in my ears the whole evening,' said Bo. 'The Foss roars, the saws hiss, the beams lie clashing against each other in the river. You can't imagine what a delightful noise it is. And I have also been sitting and thinking to myself how it would feel to work on one's own account, instead of simply being a member of a colony like this.'

'Oh, is that what you have been thinking about?' said Gertrud, in rather a cold voice, for she felt, although she did not know why, disappointed at Bo's words. 'There is no necessity for you to be unhappy about that. All you have got to do is to go back with Ingmar.'

'But there is something else,' said Bo. 'You see, Ingmar told me that he had timber lying ready to build a house close to the saw-mill. He says he has marked out a site on a hill above the Foss, on which stand a couple of fine birch-trees. And I have also had that house in my mind all the evening. I can see it both inside and out. I can see the green fir twigs before the door, and I can see the fire burning on the hearth; and when I come home from the saw-mill, I can see someone standing waiting for me at the open door.'

'I think it is getting cold, Bo,' Gertrud interrupted. 'Don't you think we had better go in now?'

'Now it is you who want to go in,' said Bo.

But, all the same, they neither of them stirred, but remained sitting beside each other in a long, almost uninterrupted silence.

At last Gertrud said: 'I thought, Bo, that you loved the colony more than anything else in the world, and that nothing would induce you to leave it.'

'All the same,' said Bo, 'there is one thing for which I would leave it.'

Gertrud again sat silent, thinking. Then she said: 'Will you not tell me what it is?'

Bo did not at once answer. Not until after lengthy deliberation, and in a broken voice, came the words: 'I may as well tell you. It is if the woman whom I love came and told me that she loved me.'

Gertrud felt as if she hardly dare breathe.

But although no word had been spoken, it seemed as if Bo had heard Gertrud say that she loved him, or something to that effect. For he began again, and this time he spoke very quickly: 'You will see, Gertrud, that your old love for Ingmar will reawaken. You were angry with him for a time because he gave you up, but now that you have forgiven him you will grow fond of him, as in bygone days,' continued Bo. 'Only think of all he has done in order to win you again! He would rather become blind than go home without you.'

'Yes; it would be dreadful of me if I were not fond of him,' said Gertrud in a faint voice. She understood now that until this evening she had thought in her heart of hearts that she could never love anyone but Ingmar.

'I can't make things clear to myself to-night, Bo,' said Gertrud. 'I do not know what is the matter with me, but you must not speak to me about Ingmar.'

After this, first the one and then the other said something about it being time to go in; but, all the same, they did not move until Karin Ingmarsdotter came out and called to them. 'I should ask you from Ingmar if you would not both come into his room,' she said.

Whilst Gertrud had been sitting with Bo, Karin had gone in to see Ingmar. She gave him several messages which she wanted him to deliver to her friends at home. She was so long-winded that it was very plain she had something to tell him which she found great difficulty in saying. At last she said, so slowly and in such an incidental manner that anyone who knew her would have no doubt about this being the real reason of her wanting to speak to Ingmar: 'Ljung Björn has had a letter from his brother Per.'

'Has he?' said Ingmar.

'I want to tell you that I was unjust to you that day we spoke together in my room, just after your arrival here,' said Karin.

'Oh no!' said Ingmar; 'you only said what you thought to be right.'

'But I know now that you had cause to wish to leave Barbro,' said Karin. 'Ljung Per writes that she is not respectable.'

'I have never said a word against Barbro,' said Ingmar.

'They say there is a baby at Ingmars' Farm.'

'How old is that child?' asked Ingmar.

'They say it was born in August.'

'It's a lie!' said Ingmar, striking the table with his clenched fist. He very nearly struck Karin's hand, which was resting on the table.

'You nearly hit my hand,' she said.

'I did not know your hand was there,' said Ingmar.

Karin went on for some time speaking about this, and Ingmar soon grew calm. 'You can't expect me to be pleased at hearing a story like this,' he said. 'Will you please tell Ljung Björn, from me, not to let this story go further until we know how much truth there is in it?'

'I will see that he does not say anything,' said Karin.

'And will you ask Bo and Gertrud to come to me?' Ingmar said.

When Gertrud and Bo came into the sick-room, they found Ingmar sitting in the darkest corner. At first they could hardly see him. 'What is the matter, Ingmar?' said Bo.

'There is that much the matter, that I have undertaken more than I can carry through,' said Ingmar. He sat rocking to and fro in his chair.

'Ingmar,' said Gertrud, going up to him, 'tell me honestly what it is that is troubling you; we have never had any secrets from each other since we were children.'

Ingmar groaned.

Gertrud went close up to him, and laid her hand on his head.

'I think I can guess what it is,' she said.

Ingmar suddenly raised his head. 'Oh no, Gertrud, you had better not guess anything,' he said. He put his hand in his breast pocket, took out his pocket-book and gave it to her. 'You will see there is a big letter addressed to the Pastor.'

'Yes,' said Gertrud, 'here it is.'

'Will you read that letter, please?' said Ingmar. 'Will you and Bo both read it, please? I wrote it directly after I came here, but then I had strength enough not to send it off.'

Bo and Gertrud sat down to the table and began to read the letter. Ingmar remained in his corner. He could hear them turning over the leaves. 'Now they are reading about that thing, now they are reading about this,' he thought. 'Now they have got to the place where Barbro tells me how Berger Sven Persson cheated us into marrying each other. Now they are reading about how she bought back the old silver beakers; and now they must

have come to what Stig Börjesson told me. And now Gertrud is finding out that I don't care for her any longer—now she is really finding out what a poor creature I am.

A breathless silence reigned in the sick-room. Gertrud and Bo did not move except when they turned over a leaf. 'And how will Gertrud be able to understand that it became too much for me to-day, the very day on which she gave in, so that I was obliged to tell her that it is Barbro that I love?' thought Ingmar. 'And how is it that it was only when I heard Barbro slandered that I could not bear the thought of being tied to another? I don't know what is the matter with me; I feel as if I should never be really myself again.'

He listened eagerly, waiting for the others to say something, but he heard nothing but the rustling of the leaves.

At last he could not bear it any longer; he lifted the bandage carefully from the eye he could still see with. He looked at Bo and Gertrud. They were still reading, but their heads were so close together that her cheek almost touched his and Bo had placed his arm round her waist. And as they read on, for every leaf they turned the nearer they drew to each other. With flushed cheeks they now and then raised their eyes from the paper, and looked deep into each other's eyes, and their eyes grew brighter and more radiant.

When at length they had finished the last page, Ingmar saw that Gertrud nestled quite close to Bo, and thus they sat embracing each other, filled with solemn, deep emotion. Of all they had read, they had perhaps only really grasped the fact that now there was no longer any obstacle in the way of their love. And Ingmar quietly folded his big hands and thanked God. And it was long before any of the three moved.

\* \* \* \* \*

The colonists were gathered together in the big room for morning prayers. It was the last service in the colony at which Ingmar would be present. He and Gertrud and Bo were to leave by train for Joppa in two or three hours' time. Bo the previous day had told Mrs. Gordon and two or three of the leading men in the colony that it was his intention to go back with Ingmar to Sweden, and remain there. On that account he had been obliged to relate the whole of Ingmars' story. Mrs. Gordon sat for a long time, thinking over what she had heard; then she said: 'I do not think that anybody can take upon himself the responsibility of making Ingmar still more unhappy than he is already; therefore I will not prevent you from going back with him. But I have a

feeling that you and Gertrud will some day return to us. I am quite sure that you will never feel quite happy anywhere else.'

But, in order that Ingmar and the others could leave the colony in unity and peace, it was decided that the majority of the members should only be told that Bo went with Ingmar and Gertrud to help them on the journey.

Just as morning prayers were about to begin, Ingmar was led into the meeting-room. Mrs. Gordon at once rose and went to meet him. She took him by the hand and conducted him to the seat beside her own. She had had a comfortable chair placed there for him, and she helped him with much care to be seated. Then Miss Young, who was seated at the organ, began to sing a hymn, and the usual service was held.

When Mrs. Gordon had finished the short address which she gave every morning, old Miss Hoggs stood up and prayed that God would grant to Ingmar a safe journey and a happy home-coming. After that several Americans and Syrians stood up and prayed that God would allow Ingmar to see the light of truth. Some of them prayed very beautifully. They promised to pray every day for Ingmar, who was their dear brother, and they hoped that he might soon be restored to health. And they all expressed the wish that he might come back to Jerusalem.

Whilst the foreigners were speaking the Swedes remained silent. They were seated just opposite Ingmar, and sat looking at him. As they did so, they involuntarily thought of everything that was secure and just and orderly in the old country. Whilst he had been with them here in Jerusalem, they had had a feeling that something of this had come to them. But now that Ingmar was going to leave them, an anxious feeling of helplessness came over them. They felt like people who have lost their way in a lawless land, that they were amongst strangers who, without pity or mercy, fight with each other for the souls of men.

And then their thoughts went back to home with sorrowful tenderness. They could see the whole neighbourhood with its fields and farmsteads, and people going about the roads in peace and quietness; everything was so secure. Day after day passed in the same way, and the years were so much alike that one could not tell the one from the other.

But just as the peasants were thinking about the great quiet at home, they realized how wonderful and significant it was that they had gone out into the world, that they had a goal before them, that they had left behind them the gray monotony of former days. And one of them lifted up his voice and began to pray in Swedish,

saying : 'I thank Thee, O Lord, that Thou hast brought me to Jerusalem. Then one after another they rose up and thanked God for having brought them to Jerusalem.

They thanked Him for the dear colony which was such a joy to them ; they thanked Him because their children from their earliest youth could live in peace and unity with all men ; they trusted that the younger people might attain to far greater perfection than they themselves had ; they gave thanks for persecutions and suffering, and for the beautiful teaching they were allowed to spread abroad.

Not one of them sat down until he had testified to the great happiness which filled his soul. And Ingmar knew that all this was said for his sake, and that this was what they wished him to tell the people at home—that they were all happy.

Ingmar straightened himself a little as he sat listening to them. He held his head higher, and the strained expression around his mouth grew more distinct.

At last, when they had all given their testimony, Miss Young began the usual hymn, and they all thought the service was at an end. But then Mrs. Gordon rose, saying : 'To-day we will also have a Swedish hymn.'

Then the Swedes began the same hymn which they had sung when they set off from their fatherland. 'We shall meet again,' they sang ; 'we shall meet again, we shall meet in Paradise again.'

And as they sang they were all much moved, and tears were in the eyes of most of them. For now they thought upon all those from whom they were separated, and whom they could not expect to meet until they one day met in heaven.

But the moment the hymn was finished, Ingmar stood up and tried to say a few words to them. He thought he would like to say some words to his countrymen which they might take as a message from the country to which he was now returning. 'I should like to tell you that I think you are a great honour to us at home,' he said. 'I think that everybody must be glad to meet you wherever the meeting may be, whether it be in heaven or on earth. I think there is nothing more beautiful than to see people making great sacrifices for the sake of righteousness.'

## CHAPTER VII

### HOME FROM THE PILGRIMAGE

WE must now relate what happened to Barbro Svensdotter after Ingmar set out for Jerusalem.

When Ingmar had been gone a little over a month, old Lisa at Ingmars' Farm began to notice that Barbro had become strangely restless and uneasy. 'It is strange how wild her eyes look,' thought the old woman. 'I should not be surprised if she went out of her mind one of these days.'

One evening she began to question Barbro. 'I can't understand what is the matter with you,' she said. 'When I was young I saw one winter the housewife at Ingmars' Farm going about with just the same look in her eyes as you have.'

'Was it the one who killed her child?' Barbro asked quickly.

'Yes,' said the old woman, 'and I am beginning to think you are going about with the same thoughts.'

Barbro made no direct answer to this. 'Every time I have heard that story, there has only been one thing that I could not understand.'

Old Lisa asked what that might be.

'Why she did not take her own life at the same time.'

Old Lisa was spinning. She put her hand on the wheel to stop it, and looked straight at Barbro. 'It is not to be wondered at that you are low, if there should be a baby on the way now your husband has left you,' she said slowly. 'I suppose he did not know anything about it when he went away?'

'Neither of us knew anything about it, neither he nor I,' said Barbro in a low voice, as if weighed down by a heavy burden.

'But now, of course, you will write and tell him?'

'No,' said Barbro; 'the only comfort I have is that he is away.'

The old woman let her hands fall into her lap and looked horrified. 'Is that a comfort?' she exclaimed.



Barbro stood at the window, staring straight before her. 'Don't you know that there is a curse resting upon me?' she asked, trying to make her voice sound as indifferent as possible.

'Oh, one can't go in and out in a place like this for so many years without hearing this thing and that,' said the old woman. 'I have heard that you belong to the family from Sorgbacken.'

For a time no more was said. Old Lisa kept her wheel going, but she now and then stole a look at Barbro, who had remained standing at the window, and who again and again shook as if in a fever. After a while the old woman stopped spinning and went towards the door.

'Where are you going?' asked Barbro.

'I don't mind telling you. I am going to try and find someone who can write to Ingmar.'

Barbro quickly placed herself in Lisa's way. 'No, you must not,' she said; 'before that letter is written I shall be lying in Langfossen.'

They stood looking at each other for a little while. Barbro was big and strong; old Lisa thought that she would keep her back by force. But all of a sudden Barbro burst into a laugh and stepped to one side. 'Write as much as you like, it is all the same to me. The only thing that will come of it will be my having to put an end to myself a little earlier than I had meant to.'

'Oh,' said the old woman, who saw that she would have to deal gently with Barbro whilst she was in this frame of mind, 'I won't write. I won't be the cause of your doing anything rash.'

'By all means write!' said Barbro. 'It won't make a bit of difference to me. Can't you see that I shall have to do away with myself in any case? It would not be right to let this miserable curse go on for ever.'

The old woman went back to her spinning-wheel and again began to spin.

'Had you not better go and see about that letter?' said Barbro, going after her.

'Will you let me have a little sensible talk with you?' said old Lisa.

'Yes, why not?' said Barbro.

'I have been thinking,' said the old woman, 'that I would promise you not to say a word about all this, but you in return must promise me neither to do yourself nor the child any harm before we are quite certain that things go as you expect.'

Barbro stood thinking it over. 'Will you promise, then, that afterwards I may do as I like?'

'Yes,' said the old woman, 'afterwards you can do as you like: that I promise you.'

'I think I might as well do it at once,' said Barbro recklessly.

'I thought that most of all you wanted Ingmar to have an opportunity of making amends for what he has done wrong,' said the old woman; 'but that would be out of the question if he heard any news of that kind.'

Barbro pressed her hand against her heart. 'I will do as you wish, but it is a hard promise for me to make. Remember what you have promised, and do not fail me.'

It was a promise between them, and it was kept. Old Lisa did not betray the secret, and Barbro after this was so careful that no one suspected what was going to happen. Luckily for her, the spring came very early that year. The snow had melted in the forests by the end of March. Barbro sent some of the cows to the Säter, which was far away on the mountain-side, as soon as there was a blade of grass to be seen. She and old Lisa went to live there to take care of the cows.

Towards the end of May a child was born to Barbro. It was a boy, a poor little fellow, weak and puny, and it cried incessantly. When old Lisa showed him to Barbro, she laughed bitterly: 'It was hardly worth while compelling me to live for the sake of that child,' she said.

'One cannot tell what such a little child as that may grow into,' said the old woman.

'Remember your promise, that now I am free to do as I please,' said Barbro in a hard voice.

'Yes,' said the old woman, 'but I must first be sure that he is blind.'

'Are you going to pretend that you can't see what is the matter with that child?' said Barbro.

Barbro herself was much more ill this time than last. The first week she was so poorly that she could not leave her bed. The child was not in the same room with her; the old woman kept it in one of the small hay-sheds belonging to the Säter. She took the greatest care of it night and day; she gave it goat's milk to drink, and kept it alive with much difficulty. Once or twice a day she brought it for the mother to see, but Barbro turned to the wall and would not look at it.

One day old Lisa was standing at the little window in the Säter hut, holding the child in her arms; it was crying as usual, and the old woman was thinking what a poor little morsel it was. 'Oh!' she called out, suddenly bending forward to see better,

'there is someone coming, I declare!' She instantly took the child to Barbro. 'You will have to take the child for a little. I must go and tell the new-comers that you are lying ill in bed, and that they had better not come in.' She laid the child on the bed, and Barbro let it lie without touching it. It was crying all the time. Old Lisa came in again directly. 'That child is crying so that one can hear it over the whole forest,' she said. 'If you can't keep it quiet, it will be impossible to prevent people from finding out about it.' Directly she had said this she went out again, and Barbro, not knowing what to do, took the child and hushed it to her breast.

The old woman was rather a long time away. When she came back again, the child was asleep, and Barbro lay looking at it.

'You need not be afraid,' said old Lisa: 'they did not hear anything; they have gone another way.'

Barbro looked at her with heavy eyes. 'You, no doubt, think you have been very artful,' she said. 'Do you think that I don't know that there was nobody there, but that you only wanted to frighten me in order to make me take the child?'

'If you like, I can take it away,' said the old woman.

'No; it can just as well stop here until it awakes.'

Towards evening old Lisa wanted to take the child away. It now lay quiet and good, opening and closing its little hands.

'What do you do with him in the night-time?' asked Barbro.

'He lies in the hay-shed.'

'Do you let him lie there just like a kitten?'

'I did not think it mattered very much where that child lay. But it can stay here if you wish.'

When the child was six days old Barbro sat up in bed watching old Lisa swathing it. 'You take hold of him so awkwardly,' said Barbro. 'No wonder he cries so much.'

'It is not the first child I have swathed,' said the old woman. 'I fancy I know as much about it as you do.'

Barbro made no answer to this, but she thought to herself she had never seen anyone handle a child so clumsily. 'You are holding him in such a way that he is turning quite black in the face!' at last she said impatiently.

'How could I know that one had to make as much fuss of this changeling as if he were a prince?' said the old woman, growing angry; 'but if you are not satisfied with the way in which I do it, you had better do it yourself.' As she said this she laid the child down on the bed, and went away in a huff.

Barbro took the child. She swathed it, and the child was soon

lying quiet and happy in her arms. 'Can you see he is quiet now?' she said when old Lisa came back, and she looked quite proud.

'I have always been told that I was very handy with children,' said the old woman, and she was some time before she could get over her ill-humour.

This led to Barbro herself looking after the child. One day, whilst she was still lying in bed, she asked old Lisa to give her some clean things for it. The old woman answered that there were not any. She had not had time to do any washing. Barbro grew red in the face, and the tears came into her eyes. 'That child is no better off than if its mother were a beggar,' she said hotly.

'You might have thought of all this before,' said the old woman. 'I should like to know what you would have done if I had not gathered together all the babies' clothes I could lay my hands on, and brought them with me.'

Barbro grew quiet again. The deep despondency which had weighed upon her the whole of the winter seemed to come back and made her hard. 'It would have been better if that child had been neither swathed nor cared for,' she said.

The next day Barbro was up for the first time. She took needle and thread, and began to cut up a sheet to make clothes for the boy. When she had been sewing for some time these dark thoughts returned. 'What is the use of my making these things for him? It would be better if he and I walked into the bog, for that will have to be the end of us both.'

She went out to speak to old Lisa, who sat milking the cows before driving them into the woods. 'Lisa, do you know how long it will be before we can make quite sure that the child can't see?'

'Oh, it will be a week, or perhaps a fortnight, before one can be perfectly sure,' answered the old woman.

Barbro went back to the house and went on with her work. When she had cut the stuff, she saw that it was uneven—her hand trembled. Soon she was trembling all over; she was obliged to leave off sewing for a time. 'Oh dear, what can be the matter with me?' she thought. 'Is it possible that I am trembling because I am so glad that I can keep the child for a week or two longer?'

Old Lisa had not an easy time of it at the Säter. She had both to drive the cattle to grass and to do all the milking alone. Barbro thought of nothing else but looking after her boy, and did not seem able to help old Lisa with anything. 'I think, Barbro,

you might find time to do a little work, and not always be sitting looking at that child,' the old woman said one day when she felt quite worn out.

Barbro got up and went out of the house. At the door she turned and said: 'You will have help enough later on in the summer; for the few days that are left I do not mean to leave him.'

The fonder Barbro grew of the child, the more frequently she told herself that the greatest kindness she could show to it was to carry out her first intention. The child continued weak and fretful. It hardly weighed any more, and was not much bigger to look at, than when it was born, and what troubled her most was that its eyes were always swollen and red. It scarcely ever tried to raise its eyelids.

One day old Lisa began to speak about how old the child was. 'He is already three weeks old, Barbro,' she said.

'No,' said Barbro quickly, 'not till to-morrow.'

'Oh,' said the old woman, 'I must have made a mistake, then, but I certainly thought he was born on a Wednesday.'

'I think you might let me keep him this one day,' said Barbro.

When old Lisa was dressing the next morning, she said to Barbro: 'The grass for the cows is very poor near here; I think I will drive them further into the forest. I don't expect we shall be back before night. Barbro turned hastily towards her; it seemed as if she had meant to say something, but she bit her lips and was silent. 'Was there anything you wanted?' asked the old woman. She fancied that Barbro wanted to ask her to stay in the house. But old Lisa went off with the cows, all the same.

In the evening old Lisa slowly drove the cows homewards. As she walked along she kept calling to the cows, which strayed first to the one side and then to the other when they chanced to see a bit of tempting grass. The old woman grew impatient, and began to scold the obstinate animals. 'Ah me!' she said at last, 'you had better not be in too great a hurry, old Lisa. You will be home more than soon enough for what is awaiting you.'

When she opened the door to the Säter, she saw Barbro sitting with the boy in her lap, singing to him. 'Dear me, Lisa, how late you are!' she called out to her. 'I don't know what I am to do: look, the boy has got some spots!' She came up to old Lisa with the child, and showed her one or two red places on his neck.

Old Lisa had remained standing at the door; she clasped her hands together in astonishment and laughed aloud.

Barbro looked at her quite bewildered. 'Then, you don't think this eruption is serious?' she asked.

'It will all be gone by to-morrow morning,' said the old woman, and she continued laughing.

Barbro grew more and more surprised, but at last it dawned upon her how anxious the old woman must have been the whole of the day. 'Yes, it would have been better for all of us if I had done it,' she said. 'And I suppose you thought so, too, as you went away for the whole day.'

'I lay awake in the night, wondering what I should do,' answered the old woman; 'and something told me that that little fellow could take care of himself best of all if I only left him alone with you.'

In the evening, when all the work was done and they were about to go to bed, old Lisa said to Barbro: 'Is it settled now that you will let the child live?'

'Yes,' said Barbro, 'if our Lord will only give him health, so that I may be allowed to keep him.'

'But if he should be both an idiot and blind?'

'I know that he is that already,' said Barbro; 'but, all the same, I cannot hurt him. Whatever he may turn out to be, I shall be thankful if I may only be allowed to take care of him.'

The old woman sat down on the edge of the bed and thought matters over. 'As things have taken this turn,' she said, 'I suppose you mean to write to Ingmar?'

Barbro looked at her quite frightened. 'I thought you wanted the child to live,' she said; 'but if you write to Ingmar, I won't answer for what I may do.'

'Well, I can't understand how you mean to manage,' said the old woman. 'Anyone who happens to hear that you have had a child may write and tell him.'

'I have thought that I would try and keep it a secret until after Ingmar had married Gertrud.'

Old Lisa was again silent, thinking over what Barbro had just said. It was clear to her that Barbro might yet be driven to do herself some harm, so she dare not contradict her. 'You have been very good to me and the other old folks at Ingmars' Farm,' she said hesitatingly. 'You can't wonder at my wanting to keep you for the mistress.'

'If I ever have been good to you,' answered Barbro, 'you can now repay me a thousandfold by doing as I wish in this matter.'

Barbro had her way, and the whole summer passed without anyone getting to know about the child. When people came up to the Säter, the boy was hidden in the hay-shed. Barbro's greatest anxiety was how she should manage to conceal him when in the

autumn she was obliged to return to the village. She was always worrying over this.

But with every day the boy grew dearer to her, and with her love some of her old quietness of mind came back to her. The child also by degrees grew stronger, although he was backward in growth and development. He continued to cry very much all the summer, and his eyes were always so red and swollen that he had trouble in opening them. Barbro did not doubt for a moment but that he was an idiot, and, although she no longer thought of doing him any injury, she had many a sad hour for his sake. It was mostly during the night that these sorrowful thoughts came to her, and then she used to get up to go and look at the child. It was a very plain baby, with a sallow complexion and thin, reddish hair. The nose was too short, and the under-lip too big; and when it slept it contracted its eyebrows, so that it had deep wrinkles in its forehead. When Barbro looked at the child, she thought to herself that it really had the face of an idiot, and she often cried the whole night, thinking that her son should be such a poor unfortunate being. But when in the early morning the child awoke after a good sleep, and lay happy in the little basket that served for a cot, and stretched out its little arms to her when she spoke to it, then Barbro again became quiet and patient.

'I do not think that mothers who have strong and healthy children feel so much love for them as I do for this poor little fellow,' she said to Lisa.

Time went on, and the summer was already on the wane. Barbro had not yet made up her mind what she should do to conceal the child on her return. Sometimes it seemed to her that the only thing she could do was to leave the country.

One dark evening in the beginning of September the weather was very bad; it both blew and rained. Barbro and Lisa had lighted a fire on the hearth, and were sitting by it trying to get warm. Barbro had the child in her lap, and was, as usual, thinking of how she could prevent Ingmar from hearing anything about it. 'Otherwise he will be coming back to me,' she thought. 'I do not know how I can make him understand that I mean to bear my burden alone.'

Just as she was thinking this, the door suddenly opened, and a wayfaring man came in. 'God's peace be in this room!' was his greeting. 'It was a lucky thing for me that I found this house. I could not find my way down to the village this dark night; but then it occurred to me that the Ingmars' Farm Säter should be somewhere hereabout.'

The man was a poor miserable fellow who in his youthful days had walked about the country as a pedlar. He had no longer any wares to sell, but went about begging. He was not exactly compelled to beg in order to live, but he could not give up his old roving habit of going about from farm to farm to gather news.

The first thing his eye fell upon in the Säter hut was, of course, the baby. He looked very much surprised when he saw it. 'Whom does that child belong to?' he at once asked.

The two women were silent for a moment; then old Lisa said resolutely: 'It is Ingmar Ingmarsson's.'

The man looked still more surprised. He was also a little uncomfortable at having come upon something he was not wanted to know anything about. In his embarrassment he bent over the child. 'How old might a little chap like this be?' he said.

This time it was Barbro who answered hastily: 'A month.'

The man was not married, and did not understand much about children. He did not know that Barbro was deceiving him. He looked with astonishment at Barbro, who sat there quite unconcerned. 'Isn't it more than a month?' he said.

'No,' Barbro answered in her quiet way.

The man, old as he was, grew red in the face; but Barbro looked as if nothing were the matter. She saw quite well that old Lisa was making signs to her, but she sat with head proudly erect, and took no notice of her. 'That old witch is not afraid of telling a lie,' he thought; 'but it is easy to see that Barbro is above that kind of thing.' The next morning, when he said good-bye, he pressed Barbro's hand significantly. 'It shan't go any further,' he said.

'No, I rely upon you,' said Barbro.

'Whatever were you thinking about?' said old Lisa the moment he was gone. 'How could you say a thing like that?'

'There was nothing else for it,' said Barbro.

'You must know that Pedlar Johannes will never keep a thing like that quiet.'

'I don't want him to keep it quiet.'

'And do you mean to say that you want people to believe that it is not Ingmar's child?'

'Yes,' said Barbro; 'for now it is impossible to hide it any longer there is nothing else to do but to make them believe this.'

'And do you imagine that I am going to be a party to this?' said the old woman.



'You will be obliged to, unless you want this poor little idiot boy one day to inherit Ingmars' Farm.'

In the middle of September those who had been to the Sätters in the summer usually took their cattle home, and Barbro and Liza also went back to Ingmars' Farm. They soon found out that the news about Barbro was all over the neighbourhood. She now no longer tried to conceal that she had had a child, but she was very much afraid of anyone seeing it. She always kept it in the little chamber behind the brewing-room, where old Lisa was. She felt she could not bear anyone to see what a poor miserable little thing it was, and that it would never be like other children.

It was no wonder that people talked very much about Barbro that autumn. They did not take the trouble to hide what they thought about her, and Barbro grew so timid that she hardly ever left the house. Even the servants at Ingmars' Farm did not treat her as they had done formerly. Both the men and the women made malicious remarks, loud enough for her to hear; and she had difficulty in making them obey her.

But that was soon put a stop to. Strong Ingmar had gone to live at the farm; he had managed it ever since Ingmar set out for Jerusalem. He happened one day to hear one of the farm hands give Barbro an uncivil answer, and he promptly gave the fellow such a box on the ears that he tumbled against the wall. 'If I hear anything of that kind again, you shall have more of the same sort,' said Strong Ingmar.

Barbro looked at him in surprise. 'It was very good of you,' she said.

He turned round and gave her a grim look. 'Don't mention it,' he said. 'As long as you are the mistress of Ingmars' Farm, I'll see to the servants showing you the respect due to you.'

Later in the autumn there was a letter from Jerusalem, saying that Ingmar and Gertrud had left the colony. 'They will perhaps have already returned before these lines reach you,' the letter said. When Barbro heard this, she at first felt as if it were a great relief. Now she was sure that Ingmar would complete the separation, and when she was quite free, she need not bear for a single day longer the heavy burden of contempt that now weighed her down.

But as the day wore on, and she went about her accustomed work, she could not help the tears again and again coming into her eyes. She was cut to the heart to feel that everything was now over between her and Ingmar. Life seemed so unutterably empty now that she knew they could have nothing more to do with each other.

One forenoon late in the autumn people kept going in and out of the school-house. Gertrud had come home the day before, and now she had placed a large table in Mother Stina's kitchen, and arranged upon it all the presents she had brought home from Jerusalem for the people in the parish. She had sent messages by the school-children to everybody who had friends and relatives amongst the colonists, asking them to come down to the school-house. And now they all came: Hök Matts, and Ljung Björn's brother, Per, and many, many others; and Gertrud gave each of them what they were to have, and told them about Jerusalem, about the colony, and about all the wonderful things that had happened to them in the Holy Land.

Bo Mansson was in the school-house the whole morning helping Gertrud, but Ingmar did not appear. During the whole of the journey he had been sure that what Karin had told him about Barbro was false; but when he came home to the parish and heard that it was true, he felt as if he could not bear to see anyone. He had gone straight to Bo's parents, for there he could remain in peace: no one spoke to him or worried him.

About noon there were fewer people at the school-house, and it happened that Gertrud was alone in the kitchen for a moment. Just at that time a tall, stately woman came in. 'Who can that be, I wonder?' thought Gertrud; 'it is strange that there should be anyone in the parish that I don't know.'

The stranger came up to Gertrud and put out her hand. 'I can guess that you are Gertrud,' she said. 'I want to ask you if it is true that Ingmar is not going to marry you.'

Gertrud was on the point of being angry that a stranger should come so abruptly and ask her such a question. But suddenly it struck her that it must be Barbro Svensdotter, Ingmar's wife. 'No, Ingmar is not going to marry me,' she said.

The woman sighed and walked towards the door. 'I would not believe it until I heard it with my own ears,' she said.

Barbro only thought of the fresh difficulties this would bring upon her. Here was Ingmar home again without any ties, and as likely as not loving her just as much as when he left her. 'Now I can never let it be known that the child is his,' she thought. 'I am quite sure that he will consider himself dishonoured in the eyes of the world if he left me with a sick child on my hands. He will be sure to ask me to be his wife again, and I am afraid that I shall never be able to say no, and then we shall have all the old misery over again. But it is hard to be obliged to go through life bearing the shame I have not deserved.'

As she stood at the door she turned round to Gertrud. 'Ingmar is not coming back to live at the farm, I suppose?' she asked in a low voice.

'Perhaps he is not allowed to, until you are properly divorced,' said Gertrud.

'I should not think he would in any case,' said Barbro.

Gertrud went quickly up to Barbro. 'I believe you are wronging yourself on purpose,' she exclaimed. 'I have said so the whole time, and now that I have seen you I am sure of it.'

'How can I be wronging myself?' said Barbro; 'you know I have a child.'

'I think you are treating Ingmar very badly,' said Gertrud, 'considering how he has been longing for you. It will be the ruin of him if you don't tell him the truth.'

'There is nothing to tell,' said Barbro.

Gertrud stood and looked at her as though she would compel her to speak.

'Can you send a message to Ingmar?' asked Barbro.

'Of course I can.'

'Then, please tell him that Strong Ingmar is dying. He must come and take leave of him, without fail. He need not be afraid of meeting me.'

'I think it would be the best thing for you both if you did meet,' said Gertrud.

Barbro again went towards the door, but when she opened it she turned round and said. 'It is not true, is it, that Ingmar is blind?

'He has lost the one eye, but the other is all right again.'

'Thank you,' said Barbro. 'I am glad I have seen you,' she added, looking kindly at Gertrud. When she had said this she closed the door and went away.

About an hour after this Ingmar was on his way to Ingmars' Farm to take leave of Strong Ingmar. He walked slowly; every step seemed to be an effort to him.

A little further up the road was a poor little hut. When Ingmar was some distance off, he saw a man and a woman leave the hut. The man looked poor and shabby, and Ingmar thought he saw the woman put something into his hand. Then she hurried away in the direction of Ingmars' Farm.

When Ingmar passed the hut, the man was still standing on the threshold. He stood counting some money which he held in his hand. Ingmar now saw who the man was. It was Stig Börjesson.

Stig did not look up until Ingmar was past. When he saw who it was, he began to shout after him: 'Wait, Ingmar, wait! Why the devil don't you wait! I want to talk to you!' He ran down the road, but, as Ingmar went on without so much as turning his head, he appeared to be annoyed. 'Very well, then, go your own way!' he shouted. 'I had meant to tell you something you would be glad to hear.'

A few seconds later Ingmar had overtaken the woman whom he had seen coming out of Stig Börjesson's hut. She was evidently in a great hurry, and walked as quickly as she could. When she heard someone coming after her, she thought it was Stig, and said, without turning round: 'You must be content with what I have given you: I have no more money.'

Ingmar said nothing, but went still faster.

'You shall have more next week, if you will only not say anything about it to Ingmar,' she said.

At that moment Ingmar came alongside of her and put his hand on her shoulder. She shook him off and turned round with an indignant exclamation.

When she saw it was Ingmar, and not Stig, who stood behind her, she clasped her hands as if in glad surprise. But when Ingmar's eyes met hers, he slowly raised his arm, and his eyebrows contracted in a deep frown. He looked as if he could have struck her to the earth.

She was not afraid; she stood still and looked at him for a moment, then she moved gently backwards. 'No, no, Ingmar,' she said; 'do not make yourself unhappy for my sake.'

Ingmar let his arm drop. 'I must ask your pardon,' he said stiffly and coldly. 'I could not stand seeing you and Stig together.'

Barbro answered quite softly: 'Believe me, Ingmar, I should be grateful to anybody who would rid me of my life.'

Without saying another word, Ingmar crossed the road and walked on in silence. Barbro did not speak, either. Again and again the tears rose to her eyes. 'To think that he will not even speak to me, although we have not seen each other for such a long time! To think of our both being so unhappy! Perhaps it would be better if I told him the truth,' she thought at times. 'I cannot bear to think that he despises me. I had better tell him the whole truth, and then make an end of myself.'

Suddenly she began to speak to him. 'You do not ask how Strong Ingmar is.'

'I shall soon be at home, and then I can find out for myself,' said Ingmar morosely.

'He came to see me early this morning,' said Barbro, 'and told me that during the night he had received a message that he should die the next day.'

'Is he not ill, then?' asked Ingmar.

'He has been troubled with rheumatism the whole winter, and he has often been unhappy that you did not come home, so that he might die. He said he could not get away from here until you came back from the pilgrimage.'

'But is there nothing special the matter with him to-day?

'No, he is no worse than usual; but he is fully convinced that he is going to die, and he has gone and laid down on the bed in the little room. He has got it into his head that he will have everything just the same way as your father had when he died, and he said we must be sure to send for the Pastor and the doctor, because they had been fetched to Great Ingmar. He also asked for the beautiful quilt which was spread over Great Ingmar's bed, but that was no longer at the farm. It had been sold at the auction.'

'There were a good many things sold at that auction,' Ingmar interrupted.

'One of the maid-servants fancied she remembered that it was Stig Börjesson who had bought it, and so I thought I ought to try and get it back. I have it here,' she said, pointing to a bundle she was carrying.

'You have always been good to the old people,' said Ingmar. His voice sounded hard and cold, although the words were meant to be kind. After that he did not say any more, but relapsed into his former silence.

Barbro looked ahead wistfully. 'What a terribly long way off Ingmars' Farm seems to be! We shall not be home for more than half an hour yet, and I shall have to walk here the whole time and see how unhappy he is. And I can do nothing to help him. It would only make matters worse if I told him the truth, for then his life would again be bound to mine. Never, never have I felt anything to be so hard.'

She tried to walk faster, but the road was a long one, both to her and to Ingmar. Their heavy thoughts clung to them, and seemed to impede their steps.

At last they reached the entrance to the farmyard. Here Ingmar barred the way for Barbro. 'I will take this opportunity of asking you about something which I have been turning over in my mind,' he said; 'and if you will not agree to it, we shall perhaps never see each other again. What I am going to

propose is this: that we withdraw the application for separation. Ingmar's voice was hard and cold, and his eyes did not rest upon Barbro, but upon the old farm that lay before him. He nodded to the houses, which seemed to look at him with grave eyes from loopholes and the low windows. 'Yes, they are keeping their eye on me,' he murmured. 'They want to see whether I have at last learnt to walk in the ways of God. I have thought much about the future the whole day,' said Ingmar aloud. "'I cannot let a woman like Barbro go to wreck and ruin," I have said to myself. "It is my duty to take care of her, but husband and wife in the ordinary sense of the word we can never be again." And now I want to ask you if you would not like to go back with me to Jerusalem, and then we could both join the colony. They are good people there, and there are so many of our own folks there that you would soon feel at home.' He paused to hear what she would say.

'Would you leave the farm for my sake?'

'I will only do what is right.' His voice was so cold that it chilled her.

'You have already lost the one eye there, and I heard that you were obliged to come home in order not to go blind.'

'We will not think about that,' said Ingmar. 'Everything will be well if we only do what is right.'

Barbro again thought that it would only be simple mercy to tell Ingmar the truth. This thought struggled and strove within her; still, she had strength enough to keep silent. 'No, I will not bring so great a misfortune upon him,' she thought. 'It is best our ways should part.'

When she remained silent, Ingmar said: 'It will be a long parting, Barbro.'

'Yes,' she answered. She gave him her hand, which he took. As he held it in his a tremor passed through him. For a moment it seemed as if he were about to draw Barbro to him in a passionate embrace. 'I will go in and tell Strong Ingmar that you have come,' she said.

'Yes, do,' said Ingmar, hastily dropping her hand.

\* \* \* \* \*

Strong Ingmar was lying on the bed in the little room. He was not in pain, but his heart beat feebly, and his breathing grew more and more difficult. 'Now I feel sure that I shall die to-day,' he thought.

As long as he was alone in the room he had his fiddle by his side. Now and then his fingers wandered over the strings, and

he thought he could hear all the old melodies. When the Pastor and the doctor came he put the fiddle to one side, and spoke to them about all the wonderful things that had happened to him during his life. It was mostly about Great Ingmar, and the brownies in the woods, who had been his good friends many a long day. But from the moment Hellgum had cut down the rose-bush outside his house, the world had not been a good place for him to live in. The brownies had quite deserted him, and he had been visited by all kinds of sickness. 'Your reverence can't think how glad I was,' he said, 'when Great Ingmar came in the night and told me that now I need not look after his farm any longer, but I could go to rest.'

He was very solemn, and it was easy to see that he was quite convinced that he was about to die. The Pastor said something about his not looking very ill, but the doctor, who had examined him and listened to his heart, said gravely: 'Strong Ingmar knows well enough what he is talking about. It will not be in vain that he lies here waiting for death.'

When Barbro came in and spread the beautiful quilt over his bed, he grew a little pale. 'The end is drawing near,' he said. He took Barbro's hand and stroked it. 'Thank you for doing this, and thank you for all you have done. And you must forgive me for having been hard upon you of late.' Barbro sobbed. There was so much sorrow and grief in her heart that she had hard work to keep back her tears. The old man stroked her hand again and smiled to her. 'We can soon expect Ingmar,' he said.

'He has come,' said Barbro. 'I only came on first, in order to tell you.'

When Ingmar entered the room, the old man with difficulty raised himself up in bed and stretched out his hand. 'You are welcome indeed,' he said.

Ingmar felt very sorrowful when he saw him. 'Never did I think that you would lay down to die on the day of my return.'

'You must not be angry with me for that,' said the old man, as if excusing himself. 'You surely remember that Great Ingmar promised me that I might go to him as soon as you returned from your pilgrimage.'

Ingmar sat down on the edge of the bed. The old man lay stroking his hand, but he did not speak for some time. One could see that death was drawing near. His face grew more and more pale, and his breathing heavier and heavier.

Then Barbro left the room, and the old man began to question

Ingmar. 'Have you had a good home-coming?' he said, looking at Ingmar keenly.

'Yes,' said Ingmar quietly, stroking his hand, 'I have had a good journey

'I have heard that you were bringing Gertrud back with you.'

'Yes,' said Ingmar; 'she came back with me, and she is going to marry Bo Mansson, my cousin.'

'Are you pleased at that, Ingmar?'

'Yes, I am very pleased,' Ingmar replied in a firm voice.

The old man looked searchingly at him. He shook his head. There seemed to be something in all this which he could not understand. 'How is your eye getting on?' he asked.

'I lost the one eye in Jerusalem,' answered Ingmar.

'Are you also pleased at that?' asked the old man.

'You know, Strong Ingmar, that our Lord will have a pledge from him to whom He has given some great happiness.'

'Have you, then, been given some great happiness?'

'Yes,' said Ingmar: 'I have had grace given to me to make good what I had done wrong.'

The dying man grew restless.

'Are you in pain?' asked Ingmar.

'No, but I am troubled,' said the old man.

'Won't you tell me what it is?'

'You are not lying to me, Ingmar, in order that I shall die in peace?' asked the old man very tenderly.

Ingmar was taken aback. He quite lost his assumed calmness, and broke into violent sobs.

'You had better tell me the whole truth,' said the old man.

Ingmar became quiet and calm at once. 'Surely I may cry when I am going to lose such a friend as you have been to me?'

After that the old man grew more and more restless and uneasy, and the cold sweat broke out upon his brow. 'You have only just come back, Ingmar,' he said at last, 'so I don't know if you have heard the news about Ingmar's Farm?'

'Yes,' said Ingmar. 'What you are thinking about I heard already in Jerusalem.'

'I ought to have looked better after what belonged to you,' said the old man.

'Let me tell you, Strong Ingmar, that you wrong Barbro if you think anything bad about her.'

'Am I wronging her?' said the old man.

'Yes,' said Ingmar, raising his voice. 'It is a good thing I have come home, so that she has someone to defend her.'



The old man was going to answer, but Barbro, who had gone into the big room to make coffee ready for the visitors, and had heard the whole conversation through the half-open door, came in. She went up to Ingmar as if she were going to speak, but then she seemed to change her mind. Instead, she bent over the old man and asked him how he felt.

‘I feel better now that I have spoken to Ingmar.’

‘Yes, it is good to talk with him,’ said Barbro softly, and she went and sat down by the window.

They all saw now that Strong Ingmar was preparing for the end. He lay with closed eyes and folded hands. They were all silent, so as not to disturb him.

But Strong Ingmar’s thoughts were constantly going back to the day when Great Ingmar died. He saw the room before him just as it was when he went in to bid Great Ingmar good-bye. He thought himself of the little children whom his master had saved, and who had sat at the end of his bed when he died. When he thought of this, his heart grew very tender. ‘You see, Great Ingmar, you were better off than I am,’ he whispered, for he understood well enough that the friend of his youth was not far away from him now. ‘The Pastor and the doctor are both here, and your quilt is spread over my bed, but there is no little child to sit at the end of my bed.’

He had hardly said this before he heard a voice answer him : ‘There is a little child at the farm to whom you could do a good deed in your last hour.’

When Strong Ingmar heard this, a smile passed over his face. He seemed at once to understand what he had to do. In a voice which had now grown very feeble, but which, all the same, was quite audible, he began to express his regret that the Pastor and the doctor had to wait so long before he could die. ‘But as the Pastor is here, I can tell him that there is a little child on the farm who is not baptized, and I would ask the Pastor if he would be so good as to baptize it whilst he is waiting.’

It was quiet in the room before Strong Ingmar spoke, but it seemed even more quiet after. Then the Pastor said : ‘It was a good thing you thought of that, Strong Ingmar ; the others ought to have thought of it long ago.’

Barbro rose, quite frightened. ‘No, no ! we cannot do that now,’ she said. She always knew that when the child was baptized she would have to say who the father was, and it was on that account she had put off the baptism. ‘As soon as I am really divorced from Ingmar I will have him baptized,’ she

thought. She was now so frightened that she could not think of what to do.

'You might give me the happiness of doing a good deed in my last hour,' said Strong Ingmar, repeating the words he thought he had heard.

'No, it cannot be,' said Barbro.

Then the doctor put in his word, that it ought to be as the old man wished. 'I am quite sure that Strong Ingmar would be easier if he had something else to think about than that he was soon going to die.'

Barbro felt as if she were bound by iron chains when they asked her to do this in a room where a fellow-creature was about to draw his last breath. She said with a low moan: 'You must be able to understand that this cannot be done.'

The Pastor went up to Barbro, and said gravely: 'You can surely see, Barbro, that your child will have to be baptized.'

'Yes, but it is too hard to-day,' she whispered. 'I will bring it down to the Pastor to-morrow; it is impossible to have it baptized now when Strong Ingmar is dying.'

'But you hear that it will please Strong Ingmar,' said the Pastor.

Ingmar had been sitting the whole time silent and motionless. But in his heart he was greatly moved when he saw how humiliated and unhappy Barbro was. 'This is terribly hard for a proud woman like Barbro,' he thought. He could not bear that the woman whom he had loved and honoured above all others should be subject to shame and dishonour. 'You must take back your request, Strong Ingmar,' he said. 'It is too hard upon Barbro.'

'We shall make it as easy as we can for Barbro, if she will only fetch the child,' said the Pastor. 'She need only write down on a piece of paper what is necessary for me to know, and I will enter it in the church books when I get home.'

'No, no, it is impossible,' said Barbro, who only thought of how she could get the baptism put off.

Strong Ingmar now raised himself in bed, and said with great emphasis: 'It will lie heavily on your conscience, Ingmar, as long as you live, if you do not see to my last wish being carried out.'

Ingmar at once rose. He went up to Barbro, bent over her, and said: 'I suppose you know, Barbro, that a married woman need not give any other name for the child's father than her husband's?' Then he said aloud: 'Now I will go and tell them to bring in the child.' He looked at Barbro; she trembled, but did not say

a word. 'God grant that she may not lose her reason!' he thought.

He went out of the room, and the few preparations were soon made. The Pastor's gown and his prayer-book were taken out of the bag the Pastor always took with him on such occasions, and a basin of water was placed on the table. Then old Lisa brought in the child.

The Pastor was standing, tying on his ruff. 'First of all I must know what this child shall be called,' he said.

'I suppose Barbro will decide what name,' the doctor suggested.

They all looked at Barbro. She moved her lips, but no sound came.

Ingmar said to himself: 'Now she is thinking what name her son ought to have had by rights, had things been as they should have been. This is why she cannot speak.' He was filled with such profound pity for her that his anger quite passed away, and the great love he bore for his wife conquered every other feeling. 'Her child can just as well be christened Ingmar,' he thought. 'It won't hurt me. We have to part, all the same. The best thing would be if we could somehow make people believe the child was mine; then she could get her good name back again.' But as he would not say this in so many words, it occurred to him to say: 'I think, as it is Strong Ingmar's doing that the child is baptized now, it would be the most natural thing if he gave the child his name.' He looked at his wife as he said this, to see if she understood what he meant.

But no sooner had Ingmar said these words than Barbro stood up. She walked slowly up the room until she stood opposite the Pastor. Then she said in a firm voice: 'Ingmar has been so good to me that I can no longer bear to hurt him; so I will rather confess that the child is his. But Ingmar the boy shall not be called, for he is blind and an idiot.'

The moment she had uttered these words she felt how terribly bitter it was that the secret upon which her life hung had been forced from her. She burst into violent sobs, and when she felt that she could restrain herself no longer she hurried out of the room, in order not to disturb the dying man.

In the big room she flung herself across the long table, and again burst into violent weeping. In a little while she raised her head in order to hear what was going on in the little room. She heard someone speaking in a subdued voice. It was old Lisa, who was telling them what had taken place at the Säter. Again she felt how unspeakably bitter it was that her secret had been revealed,

and again the violent sobbing returned. What power was it that had made her speak just when Ingmar had made everything so easy for her? Why had she not kept silent those few weeks until the separation had been made complete? 'I must make an end of it all,' she thought. 'I cannot live any longer.'

She again listened. The Pastor was now reading aloud the Baptismal Service. He spoke so distinctly that she could hear every word he said. At last he came to the place where he should name the child. He said the name in a loud, distinct voice. It was Ingmar! When she heard it, she again, in her helplessness, burst into tears.

Shortly afterwards the door was opened and Ingmar came out. Barbro rose, forced back her tears, and went to meet him. 'You can understand that everything between us must be as we arranged before you went away,' she said.

Ingmar gently stroked her hair. 'I shall not force you to do anything. After what you have just done, I know that you love me more than your own life.'

She seized his hand and held it tight. 'Will you promise me that I alone may look after the child?'

'Yes,' said Ingmar, 'everything shall be as you wish. Old Lisa has told us how you have fought for that child. No one could have the heart to take it from you.'

She looked at him in surprise. She could not quite grasp how it was that everything she had feared all at once had vanished. 'I thought you would be quite beside yourself when you heard the truth,' she said. 'But I am more grateful than I can say. I am so glad that we part as friends—that we can speak to each other when we now and again meet.'

A smile passed over Ingmar's face. 'Don't you think you might like to go with me to Jerusalem now, Barbro?' he said.

When Barbro saw Ingmar smile she was perplexed. She had never seen Ingmar look like that before. His whole face was changed. She thought that a light had come over his face which seemed almost to beautify his heavy features. 'What is it, Ingmar? What do you mean to do? I heard you call the boy Ingmar. What did you mean by that?'

'Now I will tell you something wonderful, Barbro,' said Ingmar, taking hold of both her hands. 'As soon as old Lisa had told us what had happened at the Säter, I asked the doctor to examine the child; and the doctor says there is nothing the matter with it. He says that it is small for its age, but that it is a sound and healthy child, and that it is just as sensible as any other child.'

'Does not the doctor think that it looks strange and ugly?' said Barbro breathlessly.

'I am afraid the children in our family are not any better-looking, as a rule,' said Ingmar.

'Does he not think that the boy is blind, either?'

'The doctor says he will laugh at you as long as you live because you could imagine anything of the sort. He says that to-morrow he will send you a lotion with which you are to bathe the child's eyes. And in a week's time, he says, they will be all right.'

Barbro went quickly towards the little room. Ingmar beckoned to her to come back. 'You can't have the child just now,' he said: 'Strong Ingmar begged us to lay it on the bed beside him, and now he says that he has everything just as good as father had. I do not think he will give up the child before he dies.'

'I do not wish to take the child from him,' said Barbro. 'But I must speak to the doctor myself.'

When she came back again, she went past Ingmar and stood by the window. 'I have asked the doctor, and I know now that it is true. She raised her arms towards heaven. It was like an imprisoned bird lifting its wings when liberated. 'Ingmar, Ingmar, you do not know what unhappiness means,' she said; 'no one does.'

'Barbro,' said Ingmar, 'may I talk to you now about our future?' She did not hear him. She had folded her hands, and was pouring out thanks to God. She spoke in a low voice and with great emotion, but Ingmar could hear all she said. She confided to God all the sorrow she had felt over her child's cruel fate, and she thanked Him because she now knew that her child would be like other children, because she would see him run about and play, because he would go to school and learn to read, because he would grow into a strong young man who could swing an axe and drive a plough, because he would some day bring home a wife and live at the old farm as its master.

When she had thanked God for all this, she went up to Ingmar and said with a joyous face: 'I know now why father said that the Ingmarssons were the best people in the whole parish.'

'It is because God shows greater mercy to us than to others,' answered Ingmar. 'But now, Barbro, I should like to talk to you about——'

Barbro interrupted him. 'No; it is because you never rest until you have become reconciled with God,' she said. 'My God!'

what would have become of my boy if he had not had you for his father?'

'It is not much that I have been able to help him,' said Ingmar.

'It is for your sake that the curse has been removed from him,' said Barbro tenderly. 'It was because you undertook this pilgrimage that all has come right. The only thing that enabled me to keep up last winter was the hope I sometimes had that God would be merciful to me because you had gone to Jerusalem.'

Ingmar bowed his head. 'All I can see, Barbro, is that all my life I have been but a poor frail mortal,' he said with great humility.

'Do you know what they have been saying in the little room?' she said. 'The Pastor said that henceforth people would be sure to call you Great Ingmar, because our Lord loves you so much that the curse which has rested upon my family has now been removed for your sake.'

They were sitting beside each other on the old chest. Barbro nestled close up to Ingmar, but Ingmar's arm hung straight down, and his face grew darker and darker.

'I begin to think now that you are angry with me,' said Barbro. 'You are thinking how hard I was to you when we met to-day. But I want you to know that it was the most bitter moment in my life.'

'How can I be happy?' said Ingmar. 'I don't know yet how things are between us. You say so many nice things to me, but you do not tell me whether you have the courage to remain with me as my wife.'

'Have I not told you?' asked Barbro with a smile. At this moment some of the old fear again came over her, and she shuddered. But then she looked around her: she saw the old room, the long, low window, the old seats along the wall, and the hearth where generation after generation had sat working in the light from the peat fire. All this seemed to give her a feeling of security. She felt that it would protect and guard her. 'I will never live under any other roof nor in any other home but yours,' she said.

Soon afterwards the Pastor opened the door of the little room and beckoned to them. 'Strong Ingmar now sees heaven open,' he said as they went past him.

